Interview with Andrew I. Killgore

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR ANDREW I. KILLGORE

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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Q: Mr. Ambassador, what attracted you toward foreign affairs?

KILLGORE: I think, Stuart, I started reading about the Crusades as just a kid, for some reason. That got me interested, particularly interested in the Middle East. I think that was the reason. Then in college, as it happened, I was going to a little teachers' college, and my senior year I had to do practice teaching for one semester at a nearby high school.

Q: This was where?

KILLGORE: This was in Livingston, Alabama. I grew up in Alabama, on a farm. My principal teacher introduced me to the English, American history, and civics, I think it was called, classes, and she disappeared for that semester, and I had to teach these subjects, including American history, which I was also fascinated by, the Civil War and all that.

One thing I heard old men talking about was the Civil War, when I was ten, 12- years-old. Some of them were still around there in Alabama, talking about Shiloh and -Chickamauga and those big battles. I think that's how I got interested.

If you go into very deep motivations, I suppose I was looking for a job. I grew up on a farm in west Alabama, and my one basic decision was not to stay on the farm. Since my daddy was not wealthy, he was fairly well off, but certainly not wealthy, I had to do something.

In World War II, I went off to the Pacific, down to the Southwest Pacific, to New Guinea and some of the outlying islands of what was then the Dutch East Indies. I envied my brother and all the rest of them who had gone off to Europe, gone off to the Middle East, and gone off to the Persian Gulf. So I thought, “By golly, I'm going to do that still. I'm not too old.” So I got interested in the Foreign Service that way. It was a way to get to Europe, it was a way to get to the Middle East.

Q: How did you get into the Foreign Service?

KILLGORE: I came in as a Wristonee. Actually, I was a Foreign Service staff officer at first, working for John J. McCloy, when he was the High Commissioner for Germany in 1949-50.

Q: Were you working in Germany?

KILLGORE: I was working in Germany. My first job was with the United States Displaced Persons Commission. That was in early '49 to about mid-1950. I worked in Augsburg, worked in Frankfurt am/Main. Then I got a job in HICOG [High Commission for Germany] with Displaced Persons, and I found—BOOM!—I was in the Foreign Service as a Foreign Service staff officer. Then I took an oral exam in HICOG, in Frankfurt. Ambassador Rob McClintock was the head of my panel. He was a flamboyant personality. I passed that, got a little better standing in the Foreign Service staff corps, and went off to London as a visa officer. So I was in the Foreign Service. Later I was amalgamated in under the Wriston program.

Q: I know you started Arabic training in 1955, is that correct?

KILLGORE: That's right, about March 5th.

Q: Why Arabic training?

KILLGORE: I had been a visa officer, as I say, in London from '51 to '53. Then when Ike came in, they RIFed about 100 visa officers.

Q: RIF is reduction in force.

KILLGORE: It's a euphemism inside the State Department and Foreign Service for firing. The Republicans had been out in political wilderness for 20 years, and they really believed that the government was too big and the Foreign Service was too big, so they RIFed about 100 visa officers and probably more than that, and something called veterans affairs officers. They were in the big embassies, certainly, because you had veterans of World War II living all over the globe in those days. It was ironic, because in June of 1953, the Congress passed the Refugee Relief Act of 1953, and they needed to hire about 200 visa officers, so they hired back most of the ones who had been fired or RIFed only two or three months earlier.

Q: My first job was a refugee relief officer in Frankfurt.

KILLGORE: When I was RIFed, I came back to Washington in '53, and had quite a hard time getting a job back in the State Department. I was determined I was on the right track, and eventually I got a job in the Office of Security, a part of my career I don't highlight, generally.

Q: This was during the infamous times of Scott McLeod.

KILLGORE: It was a bad time. Scott McLeod was from the Midwest, and his attitude towards the U.S. Government was summed up in a phrase he used to use called “civil service slobs.” Civil service slobs were people working for the government. In any case,

I didn't get a job because I was going to zap people; I actually got a job in about August or September 1953, after walking the streets of Washington for more than two months, because the Office of Security and the whole Eisenhower Administration were coming under attack for RIFing and firing people and calling them “security risks.” It became 10,000 security risks, it was 40,000, and it was 100,000. Since I had a law degree—well, the charge then was that the administration, particularly Scott McLeod in the State Department and Foreign Service, were throwing people out based on their analyses of officers who were looking at their file, who had no legal training and no training in evidence or procedure or anything else. That's how it was I got a job in there as a lawyer, looking at those files.

Q: This may be a digression. I think it's an important one, to get somebody who was there at that time. Did you find that you were sort of overriding extra judiciary procedures? In other words, were there some wild people in there, trying to throw people out?

KILLGORE: No question whatever. There was a kind of hysteria. Don't forget this was not terribly long after the old China hands had been zapped, based on nothing, as far as I can tell, other than, again, a kind of hysteria, saying, “We lost China and these were not merely the messengers of what was going to happen. John Paton Davies, Jr and those fellows said that Chiang Kai-shek's crowd is corrupt and Mao Zedong and his people are going to take over China,” which, of course, is what happened. But some people said Davies and the old China hands, the Foreign Service officers, mainly political officers reporting from China, were not being honest. They were reporting what they hoped would happen. Of course, we'd also had the Korean War, which was a pretty grim thing.

Then Joe McCarthy made his infamous speech over somewhere in West Virginia, saying there were 86 card-carrying Communists in the State Department. That thing about the Communists in the State Department, to my mind, was the wildest of all charges. If there was any sort of a last redoubt of what I call establishmentarianism in the States, I sometime refer to it as “old fartism,” it's right there. People who come in from the outside,

who are not sort of establishment families, they are ambitious to join the establishment. And the notion there would be Communists in the State Department was about the craziest thing ever. Nevertheless, apparently many people believed it.

Q: I think, often, anything that comes from abroad is foreign and is suspect, and anybody who reports on it is immediately suspect.

KILLGORE: Well, let's face it, Stuart. Foreign Service officers generally are not very much trusted in this society. Now, individually, they are. You can go out and talk to a group, and you'll be very well received. But the kind of stuff that's written about the diplomatic service, generally, it appears to be an elite outfit, sort of a nouveau aristocracy. If you look at the society pages here, you see embassy receptions and parties and elegantly dressed men and women. They're sipping cocktails, obviously in a situation of considerable luxury. As far as the ordinary reading public would suppose, these fellows don't really have anything to do. They go to parties and have a good time, flirt with good-looking women, eat. Well, they're “cookie pushers”! They push cookies and they drink highballs.

Q: Going back to your specific experience, did you find yourself sort of out of sync with the security people?

KILLGORE: Yes, I was anxious to get out of this.

Q: Were you all of a sudden beginning to say, “You can't do this,” and finding people quite unhappy with your saying it? When you came in, what kind of people were dealing with the security screening of Foreign Service people?

KILLGORE: The people doing the investigations were heavily Irish Catholic.

Q: I noticed, when I came into the State Department in 1955, I used to laugh, because anybody who didn't have an “X” standing for Xavier on his name, they were usually Francis X. somebody.

KILLGORE: Irish Catholics are reckoned to be more anti-Communist than the old Protestant red necks from the South, where I came from. I suppose that was what was behind it. By mid-'54, even the spring of 1954, part of the hysteria about security risks had died down. One thing, the Korean War had ended, and a reaction set in among the journalists and the country. I can remember exactly when the McCarthy hearings were.

Q: They were about '52 or '53, '54 I remember. I was in the Air Force at the time, hearing them in the barracks.

KILLGORE: I think that looking at Joe McCarthy on television for some months, however long these hearings lasted, gradually it dawned on the viewing public that there was a heavy charlatan side to Joe, that he was quite a corrupt man, willing to accuse anybody very irrationally. This whole thing is fascinating to me, because in part, again this is based on ignorance. Many people don't really have much faith in our system, they don't know anything about it, they don't know anything about the strength of it.

Let's take the China thing again. You had, what, 20 or 30 Foreign Service officers out there reporting in the period just after World War II, at the time the Communist Party took over China—that is, continental China. I have subsequently read some of the reports they sent in, and they were very fine political reporting, as far as I can tell, since I was essentially a political reporting officer and analyst.

Yet the charge in this country was that a handful of Foreign Service officers reporting from China, which then and now, I suppose, is roughly one-fourth of mankind, with an ancient history, when our people were still climbing around in trees and living in caves in Europe, that somehow or another, this handful of Foreign Service officers had changed the whole course of this gigantic country, turning it into some—also, they thought it was going to be a big threat when it went Communist. It hasn't. I can see the big maps now. There was China and the Soviet Union, the huge red blotch on the map that is spreading or creeping from one country to another. Now, if anyone knew anything about geography or history,

if anyone had known that as recently as the last century Russia, as it was out in that part, Siberia, ripped off five to 600,000 square miles of Chinese territory and kept it, anyone who imagined that those countries could really team up and be in some sort of an alliance against us, it's frightening to contemplate this kind of ignorance.

Q: In the short time that you were in the bureau of security, did you have problems with the people who were there?

KILLGORE: No, mostly I was working on clearing ambassadors and whatnot. All we were doing were updating examinations on people who had had no field investigations, say, for 20, 25 years. Mostly the cases were quite unremarkable, ordinary cases. I never got involved in any of the cases that became infamous. Infamous in the sense that good Foreign Service Officers were pilloried when they were guilty of nothing.

Q: But you were also there at the beginning of a new wave of revisionism.

KILLGORE: No, I didn't really have any trouble. No, I never got into any fights with anybody over saying this person should or should not be cleared.

Q: Why Arabic training?

KILLGORE: I'll tell you. I wanted to be a political officer. I talked to people.

Q: People will be reading this who may not be familiar with the term. What is a political officer?

KILLGORE: A political officer, generally, is in an embassy abroad. His job is to keep up with politics in that country and write reports and analyses of the political system and the political trends in that country, and particularly the implications of those for the United States and for the region as a whole. That's generally what a political officer does. You also serve as an interpreter.

Q: You have to be a language officer.

KILLGORE: You very much need to be a language officer. I wanted to get out of the Office of Security. People said, “To get into political work, have you had any political experience?” I said, “No.” Well, I just reckoned the only way to get into an area that I wanted to be, I knew I could get into political work if I could get accepted to study a very hard language and area. That's exactly why I applied for Arabic. There are 20-something countries where Arabic is spoken. I pushed every little button I had to try to get in it, including Pete Hart, who was then the head of the Office of Near Eastern Affairs, and Joseph Palmer II. I had known Joseph Palmer II since London days when I was a visa officer. Through pulling all these things, I managed to get, in March '55, in Arabic class. Out of Office of Security, and very soon I was trying to make these strange sounds.

Q: I think this is important. We'll be moving on to later stages of your career shortly, but could you discuss how you and how you think some of the fellow officers who came in to Arabic training felt? We've already mentioned “cookie pushers” being a term for diplomat, but also Arabists in the State Department have, ever since I've known about this, been considered terribly pro-Arab, anti-Israeli. How did you and your contemporaries, as much as you can go back to that time, look at the Middle East? Did you call it the Middle East or the Near East?

KILLGORE: Well, it's up and down. Mostly it's called the Middle East, although the bureau is called the Bureau of Near East and South Asian Affairs.

Q: How did you and your contemporaries look at the Middle East at that time? Was there a mind set?

KILLGORE: No, I don't think so. I think we looked at the geography and history and resources of the area, we recognized that it had tremendous geopolitical importance, a great importance for the United States. Actually, Stuart, most of the Arabists, we felt

like we were a very special bunch. We were overwhelmingly veterans of World War II. That was a camaraderie. It's difficult to learn Arabic. You have to work like hell at it. We were both amused and a bit put out by the term “Arabist,” which is actually a euphemism employed by the Zionists to signal, “Watch out for this guy.” It means the guy might be an anti-Semite, probably anti-Semitic. Certainly anti-Israel. No, we didn't look on ourselves as being—in the first place, to describe a complex, brilliant officer in the Foreign Service, in terms of his being anti-or-pro a particular foreign country is terribly demeaning and degrading. People are enormously complex. We all felt that we had been in World War II, we had helped bring down the Axis, which was the worst of all evils I ever heard about in history. So then because you study Arabic, to be called an Arabist. Is a person called a Frenchist or a Germanist or Chinologist? I have never seen Chinologist.

Q: Somebody who studies Chinese, yes. It's a term that comes from the British, I think.

KILLGORE: I don't know where it comes from, but certainly the use of it all the time, I don't put that on the British; I put that on political forces in this country.

So we felt close to each other. The area wasn't well known, and we thought we were doing a job for our country of reporting back and trying to create knowledge about an important area of the world for us, for the United States. We didn't regard ourselves as patriots. To my mind, that's a stupid term to call someone a patriot, inasmuch as I regard about 99.99% of Americans as very fond of their country, and very strange if they're not. As I say, there was a closeness. Some people refer to it as a club. I think the fact that we were perhaps resented by some groups in this country, including powerful forces in the State Department, contributed in a peculiar way to the excellence of our work, the outstanding quality of much of our work.

I was riding in March of this year from Jerusalem down to the Gaza Strip. The driver was named Kiley, from Ireland, driving a United Nations vehicle. I asked him how could it be that so many great literary figures had come from Ireland, and I started spinning them

off, headed by William Butler Yeats, whom I think is the greatest of all poets. He didn't respond to me, but after a mile or so, he said, “Maybe it's the repression.” I thought about that, and I have decided that probably Kiley was right. Jesse Jackson has the passion and fire because he is a man who's come up from a great deep ocean of repression against black people in this country. No white politician could talk like Jesse Jackson. It would be impossible for one to be there. We had a fake one called Senator whatever his name is, kept quoting Kinnock, the British politician, the senator, whatever his name is.

But I don't want to press the point of any resentment we felt too far. We felt that we were doing a good job, a good professional job. We were determined not to be prejudiced, to show any overt prejudice in our official and other acts. We recognized, of course, that the United States is made up of various groups and that we don't claw at each other. Rather, we have to support and love each other. So we understood what motivated the Zionists. We understood the Holocaust. We understood the things that had happened to them.

Q: I would like to single out two posts. I note here you served in Beirut from 1956 to 1957, Jerusalem from 1957 to 1959, and in Amman, Jordan, from 1959 to 1961. Maybe to concentrate just briefly on your Jerusalem-Amman time, because these two tie together pretty much. Jerusalem was, in those days, part of Jordan.

KILLGORE: That's right. It was divided, you know, the new city and the walled city.

Q: What type of work were you doing?

KILLGORE: I was covering the West Bank politically. I did some consular work on the side. When the visa officer would be gone or something, or I would sign a passport if someone was away. But overwhelmingly, I did political reporting, political analysis for the West Bank and Arab Jerusalem for that two and a half years I was there. I hadn't had any experience as a political officer. And you know, the State Department can't quite tell you what to do;

you have to figure out what to do yourself. So I decided that I would do a lot of biographic reports, and I started doing biographic reports on well known political figures.

Q: Could you explain what biographic reports are?

KILLGORE: You write a report giving the details of a person's life, how old he is, what kind of a family he's from, where he studied, just a biography. What's this person like? It's a short biography. It may be as little as four or five pages, something like that. How many children he has, how rich he is, what political parties does he belong to.

Q: How do you do this?

KILLGORE: You go talk to the people and you talk to other people about different people. One of the interesting things I discovered there after a while was that there is a Palestinian establishment in the West Bank. Everybody who's anybody is interrelated by blood, marriage, or certainly business. There's a very definite strong establishment made up of business people, lawyers, doctors, professors, journalists, and religious people. These reports were very highly valued. I got all sorts of kudos from the State Department. They loved them. Eventually, a lot of this stuff was stuck into a CIA file, because they had the machinery where you could record the biographic information about various politicians or business people on a computer, and you could punch a button, and it would come out in a second, because the State Department and the White House and the U.S. Government always are terribly afraid something will happen and a new guy will pop up that no one ever heard of. (Laughs)

Q: It is an obsession. Of course, it's important, and often information is rather sparse, but at least it makes you appear that you're on top of things.

I think this is important, because we're talking now in 1988, and there are rather serious resistance movement, both civil and more physical, in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

But you were there and dealing with this before it became under the control of Israel. What was the movement then? How did you see things going in the West Bank?

KILLGORE: There was one movement very heavily against King Hussein, against his central government in Amman. There was a resentment that these Bedouin-dominated regimes, lacking in culture, as seen by the better educated Palestinians, were ruling this very talented and highly educated people. It was sort of like Rome and Greece. Rome ruled Greece, but the Greeks looked down on the Romans for a long time. The same thing with the Arabs and the Iranians, when Islam swept over. To this day there's a real resentment in Iran, for example, that, as they see them, the sort of scruffy desert Arabs came to rule what had been the great empire of Cyrus and Darius and whatnot. ~"We have a superior culture. Also, we had a lovely religion, Zoroastrianism, and Islam had taken it over." As a matter of fact, the language almost became Arabic. That's one thing.

Another thing, there was a deep resentment against the United States, which was reckoned to be supporting Israel. This, of course, was before the Palestine Liberation Organization was begun, which, I believe, was 1964. The Palestinians were keenly interested in education. They would do anything and spend any resources they could borrow, beg, or steal to educate their children.

Q: Were many going to the United States?

KILLGORE: Many, many were going off to the United States.

Q: Was there any problem with this on our part?

KILLGORE: No. On the whole, there was also a conviction on the part of the Palestinians that the Israelis would seize the proper moment to grab the rest of Palestine, which was the West Bank and Gaza. I confess that I argued that they were wrong, that they just would be satisfied with what they had, roughly 78%, 79% of the whole British mandate of Palestine, but it turned out the Palestinians were right after all. It was heavily agricultural,

olive growing, Palestinians were already leaving, of course, to seek opportunity in Persian Gulf. Oil was being produced by that time, and the economy, particularly of Kuwait, was growing fast, the economies of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates.

Mostly I found—as do most Americans who get to know the Palestinians—them very attractive. They are a bit like the southerners, very much family oriented. They are absolutely enjoined to be generous. You're bound to be generous and hospitable, that's part of the culture, and you're bound to be polite—all the things that I learned as a boy down on the farm in Alabama. I found them very, very attractive, on the whole. A tremendous emphasis on food. My God, you think we eat in this country? (Laughs) You should go out there!

Q: You had no particular problem getting out and around?

KILLGORE: No. I traveled to every single part of the West Bank. There's hardly a village I didn't go to.

Q: Going back to what you were reporting, you say you received all sorts of kudos. Was there any problem in reporting? Did you feel you were under any constraints from reporting on what was going on in the West Bank?

KILLGORE: No. The '67 War hadn't happened. Things changed fundamentally after the 1967 War, because in the '67 War, Israel lost most of its international friends, at least it aroused a great deal of resistance and resentment in the Western world after grabbing the West Bank, particularly as it became clear that they weren't going to relinquish it.

There was one occasion, particularly, which happened in probably the fall of 1958 or a bit later. It would have been mid-winter of 1958. I was still consul in Jerusalem, living right there by the Mandelbaum Gate. A fellow came through and talked to me, a journalist, a big guy. I can't remember his name. I don't know whether he was Jewish or whether he was Christian. But we talked at great length. I wish, in view of what happened subsequently,

that I had been able to remember his name. But I said, of course, that no state or no country in between the great population centers of Egypt and the Tigris Euphrates, Iran centers, or if you go back to the Hittites, from the Turkish plateau, no country in between had been able to maintain independence for very long, and thus, unless Israel made some sort of a peace deal with the Palestinians, her days were numbered, some decades.

I moved up to Amman, the capital of Jordan, in September 1959. After I'd been up there just a few weeks, I got an official informal letter, as it's called, via the diplomatic pouch from Murat Williams, who was the deputy chief of mission in Tel Aviv at our U.S. Embassy at Tel Aviv, Israel, at that time. Murat said in that letter that, “I hate to send you this letter, but a man who talked to you several months ago apparently talked to the Israeli foreign ministry about a conversation you had in your office, in which you talked quite dispassionately about great historical trends and history of the area, and that you thought that Israel, unless it made a deal with the Arabs, would have a limited life span out in the Middle East.” This man, according to what the Israeli foreign ministry told Murat Williams, what this man who interviewed me some months earlier had said to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he said, “While you spoke with great dispassion, he sensed (that's the term he used) that the demise of Israel wouldn't upset you unduly,” or something to that effect.

Well, I wrote back to Murat Williams. This was a shot across my bow, because it was based on the fact that I was an Arabist and I was getting pretty popular and I was well known and I was beginning to get promoted. I was coming in to be a figure of some consequence in the system. I wrote back and I told Murat Williams, “Tell the fellow in the foreign ministry who spoke to you about this that I said, 'Go to hell.'” That's the way I handled that. But I recognized it for what it was.

Q: You are saying that in beginning to deal in this world, that objectivity could be suspect within the system.

KILLGORE: Stuart, objectivity will kill you, literally. You are not going to get anywhere. If you tell it as you see it, now—Q: We're talking about the China hands, too.

KILLGORE: About the China hands. And don't forget all Foreign Service officers remember the old China hands very well, too, and they remember Joe McCarthy, and they remember Scott McLeod. But that incident happened.

Q: Before letting that incident go, did you feel Murat Williams was doing this more or less under instructions?

KILLGORE: No.

Q: Or was he doing this, you could say, protecting his bailiwick, which happened to be Israel at that time?

KILLGORE: I rather liked Murat Williams and had respect for him. He later became ambassador of one of the Central American countries. I just thought that Murat had been asked to do that, and he did it. I'm not sure he'd been asked to do it, but it was mentioned to him, and I think he felt, as a friend, he ought to tell me.

Q: So this was being sort of, "Here I am, and you might watch it, because somebody has got their eye on you."

KILLGORE: That's right. I went a little bit into the background. I said it, as I have in a thousand conversations. Because it makes a point that you can't dodge. The great Arab empire based on Damascus lasted 90 years, 660 to 750, and it went over to the big population center in Baghdad. The crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem lasted 89 years. And United Israel, old Israel in Judah lasted 70 years. That was under David and Solomon. Later, Assyria started pinching off Israel, which was to the north. At least if they didn't actually pluck it off, they had to pay tribute to Assyria.

So you can't be independent. There aren't enough resources in that area to hold yourself off without having bigger population centers and bigger resources with you, and those were the three periods, those periods in history. I don't know of any other where any country lasted longer. Of course, Rome ruled it longer, but that wasn't where the center was. Alexander, when he died, some of his people ruled there for a long time. The Egyptians ruled it for a long time. Cyrus and his guys ruled it for at least a century and a half, two centuries. But it wasn't based in that little—after all, along that eastern Mediterranean coast, Stuart, you don't have any resources.

The desert starts as soon as you go 20 miles to the east of Amman. Hell, the Jordan Valley is a desert, and the Judean hills are desert. You get down a little bit down in the Negev desert of Israel, that's all desert. You just don't have the resources.

Q: How about when you were in Amman? Did you have a different perspective on that particular area of the Middle East, not only the West Bank, but of relations with Israel and also Syria and Saudi Arabia and all?

KILLGORE: It's a little different working in a capital of a country as opposed to a province, as the West Bank was, the province of Jordan then, though the most populous, probably. Well, you were dealing, of course, with other embassies. You had probably 50 or 60 or 70 embassies there. Of course, you had a consular corps in Jerusalem, but you were dealing with ambassadors and with political officers and with a central government and a Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Tourism, with the King and with his family, and you were trying to please your ambassador.

Q: How did you feel? You came from this society which, from talking with you, you obviously enjoyed.

KILLGORE: I loved it.

Q: The Palestinians and all, particularly in those days, were not really under siege, but rather unhappy with being under King Hussein. All of a sudden, you are plunked down in the capital of King Hussein, you have an ambassador. Who was your ambassador?

KILLGORE: It was Ambassador Sheldon T. Mills, the first one, and then the last, about the three last months I was in Amman, it was William B. Macomber. Did you meet him?

Q: Yes.

KILLGORE: We used to say about Bill, people that had worked for Bill had been "Macomberized," due to his propensity to shout. (Laughs) Actually, he was a sweet guy, but he was kind of a bully boy, too, very odd.

Q: He later became Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

KILLGORE: I'm very fond of him.

Q: Did you find yourself somewhat in conflict? You were the boy from the provinces, with a provincial eye, and all of a sudden in the capital. There's a tendency for localitis to set it. In other words, if you're in Amman, you look towards Hussein and think about, "Here are these people trying to do something about these difficult people on the West Bank," but you came from the other side. Did you find yourself in any conflict?

KILLGORE: No, I don't really think so, Stuart. In the first place, Amman is a mainly Palestinians city. You know it's 1 million now? It's a beautiful city, made of stone. No, I realized that King Hussein and the Army were, in effect, maintaining a trouble-free border. A trouble-free border for Israel and the West Bank, that's what it amounted to. That's the basis of King Hussein being regarded as moderate. He always fits into the moderate category. I don't think Hussein and the Jordan Army used, really, an undue repression. They excited a lot of criticism on the part of the Palestinians. The King would get off on an anti-Communist kick sometimes, and he'd throw Palestinians in jail for what they

called communism. But his regime was not tyrannical. In fact, oddly enough, there is no tyrannical regime in the Middle East. I'm not saying that regimes are democratic; Hussein was the boss. But someone would get thrown into prison—well, they had a concentration camp down south of Amman called Ma'an. There's a town and a concentration camp called Ma'an. Such a fellow might receive a long sentence, maybe five years, but the way it worked out in practice was, someone who knew someone who knew the Minister of Internal Security would say, “Mohammed, he's a good guy. He's got a big family. It's terrible for them if you keep him in jail. Terrible.” And very soon, someone would be talking to the minister, and very soon someone would be talking to the palace. Generally, within three or four months, the person who was up for five years would be released with some sort of a warning—”Don't talk so much. Keep your mouth shut.”

Actually, I became very fond of King Hussein. I thought he was a man of very considerable good sense, and he was quite an intelligent fellow, not in any intellectual sense—he's not remotely interested in intellectual pursuits—but he's a fine pilot, he's a fine racing-car driver, he's a good sportsman, he is a first-class speaker, first-class, in both Arabic and English. He is personally brave. That's been exaggerated a bit. I don't think he did anything that he didn't have to do, and I don't think he used any excess cruelty or tyranny in doing it. After all, he's holding a country there with some forces pulling awful hard in different directions. So, no, I didn't have any trouble.

Q: How were relations with Jordan in those days? We're talking about from '57 to '61.

KILLGORE: Our relations had become peculiarly close about that time. You see, in the 1956 Suez War, Britain, France, and Israel had attacked Egypt, as you recall, because Gamal Abdel Nasser, the president of Egypt, had nationalized the Suez Canal Company. Theretofore, the British had been giving a big subsidy of $20 million or $25 million a year to King Hussein, essentially which went to support the Jordan Army and budget support.

After Britain joined up in what was a clear-cut aggression against Egypt, it was not politically possible any longer for Hussein to accept his main outside support from a country that had been an aggressor against a fellow Arab country. So the British subsidy had to stop. General Glubb Pasha, John Bagot Glubb, who had been Commander in Chief, had to go, and he did.

That year, in 1957, is the year when we started picking up the subsidy that the British had been supplying to King Hussein and to Jordan for years and years. So our relations became close. We gave money to help with economic development projects, and we gave something called budget support. The budget support mainly went to, obviously, support the Jordan Army, and we started supplying some military equipment, not enough to get us in trouble with the Israel lobby here, which wasn't so terribly powerful at that time, because, as I say, '67 was the cutoff date. 1967 was when Israel really had to cling to us with all force.

Q: Because we were the only major friend.

KILLGORE: Essentially the only friend left with money. That's what it got down to. As you remember, the Israeli forces got out of the Sinai by the U.S. threatening to cut off the support.

As a matter of fact, the assignment in Amman was a satisfying assignment. I continued to do political reporting. Ambassador Mills relied on me heavily, because I had a very, very detailed knowledge of personalities and institutions and parties and interrelationships in Jordan and the West Bank by that time. I drafted many, many of his telegrams. He relied on me and trusted me implicitly, and relied on me for advice. As a matter of fact, we became close friends. We were quite different personalities. He's an American Gothic, and I was sort of a—what would you say?—passionate southerner. (Laughs)

Q: Moving on, you then had Iranian-Iraq affairs for four years in Washington, from 1961 to '65.

KILLGORE: Actually, what happened there, Stuart, I worked the first year, roughly 15 months, I worked on the Arabian Peninsula affairs. Mainly, Talcott Seelye, Ambassador Seelye, handled Saudi Arabia, but I would handle Saudi Arabia when he was away, and I handled all of the periphery, the Yemens—it was called Yemen at that time—Aden and the Aden protectorate, Oman, and what was then called the Trucial coast.

Q: Trucial states.

KILLGORE: Trucial states. That's now essentially United Arab Emirates. Bahrain, Qatar, and Kuwait, all the periphery, and the neutral zones, the Saudi-Kuwait neutral zone and the Saudi-Iraqi neutral zone, all those fell in my bailiwick.

Q: What were you doing? What were your prime concerns as a desk officer, dealing with both those affairs? We're talking about the early Sixties. With the new Kennedy Administration, did you feel a new administration, a new look at things?

KILLGORE: Oh, yes. We had a deep admiration for John F. Kennedy, and we regarded the Eisenhower Administration as sort of Cro-Magnon. Kennedy was a bright, new mind, personality, a man who could articulate eloquently what we were trying to do in the world. He was a source of great hope.

Q: But how was that translated into your particular desk?

KILLGORE: The President never called me up, but he not infrequently called up desk officers in the State Department at that time and asked them what was going on.

Q: That did sort of ginger things up in the State Department, that you might actually be called upon by the President at the working level.

KILLGORE: Exactly. Literally, the desk officer jobs are the best jobs in the State Department, easily, Stuart, in my opinion. You are dealing, as a desk officer, with everything from the sublime to the ridiculous.

Q: Can you give me a few examples of what you were doing? I want to get down to you.

KILLGORE: All right. Say a crazy guy calls me up from California and says, “What the hell are we doing in Yemen?” He might be literally crazy, or you get letters from him, or business people, others want to come in and talk to you, journalists want to come in and talk to you. People from the various embassies in Washington who handle Middle Eastern affairs wanted to come talk to you. You were constantly talking to people. What about something for the President's night reading, if something had happened in Yemen, if something had happened in Saudi Arabia, if something had happened in Kuwait? You'd draft up half a page, you'd send it up through the system. It might land on the President's desk.

Say the Foreign Minister Faisal, who later became the King of Saudi Arabia, was coming to the country. Oh, my God, you had to work on scheduling, you had to clear it with the White House, you had to pick out every single move that was going to be made. How is he going to get here? Who is going to be invited to the lunches or the dinners? What are the talking points that the Secretary of State is going to talk with him about? What will the President say to him? Is there anything new we can cook up that will help our relations along? What about the oil business? You are literally involved in every single thing that's going on. It's a very satisfying job, because as a relatively young, relatively low ranking officer, you are dealing with the top brass of the U.S. Government on anything that concerns the United States and that country or those countries that you're working on.

Q: Was it an area that concerned us much in those days?

KILLGORE: Oh, yes! By that time, it was very clear that the Persian Gulf area there was where the oil was. After all, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait had big oil. As a matter of fact, it was already known that very big oil had been hit down in what's now the UAE. I remember that Shakhbut, who was the head of Abu Dhabi, came here to Washington to see if he could get his eye fixed. His eye was gone, but he came over here. We decided, “Heck, that's going to be a very big deal down there in Abu Dhabi. Let's invite him over to the State Department.” So we asked Secretary Rusk, “Would you be willing to see him?” And the Secretary's office said, “Yes, we'll give him tea.”

He comes over at 4:30 in the afternoon with an entourage of eight or ten people, and I find myself interpreting between Secretary Rusk and Shakhbut, and I don't even know gulf Arabic very well, but I did the best I could.

In any case, he came up to the Seventh floor of the State Department—maybe it was on the eighth floor. In any case, an elegant area up there. Secretary Rusk came, they had a nice get-together. Of course, Shakhbut, who was the ruler of Abu Dhabi at that time, was very happy to be there. I remember that Dean Rusk had two Scotches in a very quick hurry. It's not well known, but he liked to drink. He drank a lot. As a matter of fact, can I say this?

Q: Sure.

KILLGORE: Someone once said—I only heard this said once—within the last two or three years, it was written somewhere, said Rusk would have been a great Secretary of State if he hadn't been such a lush.

Q: But going back to Shakhbut, he was well renowned as a very stingy man.

KILLGORE: Very stingy.

Q: I served in the Persian Gulf, and there were stories about him keeping the treasury under his bed.

KILLGORE: Well, he did, literally!

Q: He was deposed, wasn't he?

KILLGORE: He was eventually deposed.

Q: By his brother or nephew?

KILLGORE: They said it was the British, but I think essentially it was the family, because the family knew, and the people down there, the tribesmen, all the tribal connections were very important, they knew there was a lot of money floating around, and they didn't think that Shakhbut was using it properly. It was time to do something, build some schools, build some ports. What about some hospitals? Well, Shakhbut was just holding the damn money. Do you know he's still living? He lives down in Al-Ein, and he's sharp. I saw him within the last three or four years. He keeps up with what's going on in the world. A very capable guy, very smart, very intelligent.

Q: Then you moved over to Iraq-Jordan affairs.

KILLGORE: It was a very interesting desk to work on.

Q: What were our concerns there at that time? Iraq had had a repressive regime which, if I recall, I'm not sure we had relations at that point.

KILLGORE: Let's see. In '58, of course, the King was killed; Nuri Said was killed. And Abdul Illah, the King's uncle, was killed. Abd- al-Karim Qasim took over. He was an unbalanced guy. He was a decent chap in this sense, he wanted to do something for the country. He was keenly interested in really helping Iraq, but he didn't know how. He didn't have the educational background. Abd al-Karim Qasim had taken over when the King was

killed. This was, of course, before I took over the desk. I didn't take over the desk until the fall of '62. I forgot when he was overthrown.

Of course, on that desk, we had to make our peace with the post-royalist regime in Iraq. We were aware that Iraq had vast oil reserves, probably near Basra, fields second only in richness to those in Saudi Arabia. There was almost always a Kurdish war going on. The Kurds in the north were, one way or another, in a dissident mood or in actual rebellion. Of course, we were very much concerned to keep Jordan and the West Bank stable because of the Israel connection.

That was also a very satisfying period. One of my bosses in what we called NE, Office of Near Eastern Affairs, was not my favorite officer, but that's really neither here nor there.

Q: Was this because of outlook?

KILLGORE: Yes, because of outlook. He was a strong, zealous supporter of Israel, and he thought the Arab states were just crazy not to go ahead and recognize it, let them have what they wanted. Also, he was turned off by the fact that some Arab diplomats, he said, just chased these cute little blonde girls that really didn't have to be chased, they just grabbed them. He hurt my career, really, because, as I say, he was a zealous man. A very decent chap, though.

Q: Was he a political appointee?

KILLGORE: No, he was a Foreign Service officer. He was an Arabist, as a matter of fact. Most Arabists who study Arabic, as indeed most officers who study any foreign language and the culture of foreign lands, get to be rather fond of that people because they get to understand them. But this person, for example, he used to say, “Well, I can take my whole family and go on off on a picnic with the officers from the Israeli embassy, and all these young officers in the Arab embassies want to do is chase girls.” Well, in fact, what he meant was in the Israeli embassy, they assigned their very attractive essentially Western

officers, who were generally very attractive, whose English was excellent, who understood the West, and who understood us. But in any case, that was a challenging time.

In 1964, King Hussein came over. I had the privilege of getting in a big plane and flying off. We talked the White House into giving us a plane, flew over to Amman to fetch him to the States in '64.

Q: What you're saying is that during the Kennedy period and, I guess, into the Johnson period, this is before the '67 War, there was pretty much an openness within the higher ranks of the State Department—"Okay, what do they have to say?" You could reach up. You weren't feeling under any particular constraint. There might have been some constraints within the office, but you weren't under any muzzle or anything like that.

KILLGORE: No. Joe Sisco was sitting up in the IO, we called it, Office of International Organizations Affairs, that was dealing with the U.N. and whatnot, and Sisco was playing heavy footsie with the Israeli embassy and the lobby by that time.

Q: You mean the Israeli lobby.

KILLGORE: That's right, the lobby.

Q: The lobby, in Middle East terms. Because it used to be, the lobby was the China lobby.

KILLGORE: That's called the lobby. And it has peculiar significance, because it's really the only foreign policy lobby, the only one of any consequence at all in Washington. But he was up in IO upstairs, and we were down in—well, we had Phillips Talbot, who was from the outside, but he served, and he knew a little something about the outside world. The great Rodger Davies, who later became U.S. Ambassador to Cyprus, was his deputy. Davies was a great man, tragically shot dead in Cyprus in the embassy. No, we didn't feel under heavy pressure. However, I think I came to be regarded as "pro-Arab," partly as a

consequence, I think, I went off to Baghdad in '65, after leaving the desk, to become public affairs officer.

Q: That was sort of an odd assignment.

KILLGORE: It was an odd assignment, because the background of that one is crazy.

Q: Could we go into this?

KILLGORE: Yes. There was a real son of a bitch named Bill Crockett.

Q: He was head of management.

KILLGORE: What he really was, he was a GSO, General Services Officer, in Rome. Then he became the administrative officer of the embassy in Rome. When Congressman John Rooney of Brooklyn, I think it was, who was in charge of appropriations in the House, for the State Department and the USIA and, I think, Justice, would go over to Rome, It was said that Crockett would get him plenty of girls and plenty of whiskey, and he became a friend of Rooney. By virtue of the fact that he was supposed to have special clout and a special “in” with Rooney, he came back here and became the Assistant Secretary for Administration, and subsequently moved up to be “M,” so-called management.

Q: A top management position.

KILLGORE: What really happened was this. This is going back just a little bit. You always had an Assistant Secretary for Administration, but after the Wriston Program brought in probably 1,000 Foreign Service staff officers as Foreign Service officers, including visa officers and passport and citizenship officers and admin officers and everything else, the old Foreign Service Officer Corps was a little uneasy being buried among all these peasants, who had now become Foreign Service officers. So they said, “To protect our

interests, we need someone a little higher up in admin," and Loy Henderson became "M," Deputy Secretary for Management, whatever the title was.

In any case, Crockett came back and became Assistant Secretary for Administration. Then Secretary of State Dean Rusk, who, despite the fact he had a brilliant mind, was a pathetic Secretary of State, as far as I'm concerned, partly because he had served out in Southeast Asia as a colonel, he was just fascinated by Southeast Asia and not fascinated by anything else.

Q: I have talked to William Tyler, who was in charge of European affairs, who said any time Europe came up, he'd say, "Go talk to George Ball." In other words, according to some of the people I've talked to, he was not interested in European affairs.

KILLGORE: No.

Q: You found this true of Near Eastern Affairs?

KILLGORE: Well, yes. He wouldn't make a decision. He just wouldn't make a decision. He used to say, "The desk officer who puts his hats on . . ."—in the first place, desk officers didn't wear hats—"at 5:00 o'clock and goes home is making foreign policy." In other words, don't do it. Don't make a decision. Don't take any initiative. Don't anticipate anything. In any case, dozens of times, I would go up with Robert Strong, who was the director of the Office of Near Eastern Affairs, and Phillips Talbot, who was Assistant Secretary of NEA, Near Eastern Affairs Bureau. We would have drafted our telegram, and we'd go up. If there was something that needed doing in the Middle East or related to the Middle East, or something needed to be forestalled, and we go up to Rusk's office, he was very pleasant, a southern gentleman. I don't use it as a derogatory term. He was very polite, courtly.

Q: You talked southern to him.

KILLGORE: I talked southern. In any case, he'd stand up, and we'd always shake hands. He'd shake hands with me, and I was just a desk officer. We'd sit down there, and he'd look at the cable, and he'd read it over, and he had an unerring ability to pick out the weakest point in an argument. He'd hit that every time, and hit it very quickly. We'd talk about that a bit. Then all of a sudden, he would hit his knees with his hands, he was getting up. We all jumped, we'd all jump up, we'd shake hands with the Secretary, and we'd leave. And we walked back down the steps from the seventh floor, down to the sixth floor where we were. Bob Strong and Phil Talbot looked at each other. “What did he decide?” He hadn't decided anything. He simply would not decide. If he could possibly avoid a decision, he would.

Now, in those circumstances, a freebooter like Bill Crockett, who didn't understand anything except how to maneuver for power, became the most powerful man in the State Department. Crockett's idea was, “Because it'll be a bigger empire for me, let's make the Foreign Service, USIA, AID (though it was never quite certain what to do with CIA), we'll make them into some giant Foreign Service corps, a Foreign Service officer corps, which will include a few extra thousand people,” of course, of which Crockett would still be the top guy.

And under that program, and, I think, under the influence of the guy who I mentioned didn't like me, I suddenly found myself shanghaied, really, off to Baghdad as a public affairs officer.

Q: This was considered a peripheral assignment for the way you appeared to be going?

KILLGORE: Stuart, in the first place, you never get out the agency or the department you're in. That's bad business. They don't understand how your system works.

Q: You're speaking about USIA, which was its own agency.

KILLGORE: It was at that time. Carl Rowan, who just shot a kid the other night—I don't blame Carl, either. I like Carl. One of the amusing things about Carl Rowan is that I called on him, a courtesy call before getting ready to take off for Baghdad, because my fight to avoid the assignment failed. As a matter of fact, I almost got myself thrown out of the Foreign Service then, because I fought it too hard. Rowan was very courtly and very nice to me. That afternoon, he resigned his job. I called on him that morning, and that afternoon, he resigned. He didn't mention anything to me about it.

In any case, I remember attending a staff meeting at USIA here. The first one I attended had a huge table. Ed Murrow had had a cancer operation, had a lung removed or something. Someone was acting. In any case, it got around to the fellow who handled congressional relations in USIA, and he said, “Well, the amalgamation will be going forward. I just haven't really had a chance to sit down and have a good conversation with Senator Fulbright (who was head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee), who's off somewhere on vacation overseas, but he'll be back next week, and I'll go up and have a talk.” In fact, of course, the amalgamation which was supposed to take place never had any chance because Fulbright opposed it from the beginning. All they had to do was go up and talk with him. There was no chance of it, ever. In the first place, the Foreign Service officers didn't want it either, for God's sake. After all, what's the honor of being a Foreign Service officer if you let any and everybody in the business?

In any case, the idea was that since the amalgamation was going to take place, you would have an earnest-money thing. You would have officers start moving over from State to USIA, and USIA to State. And they say, “It's going to take place soon.”

Q: This is all based on a false presumption that everybody knew was false.

KILLGORE: It was nonsense! It was too pathetic. Of course, we run our affairs very pathetically, because there's no one out there to advise us.

Q: But then you were being used sort of as a sacrificial lamb, it sounds like—"Okay, we know this isn't going to go, but we've got to toss some meat to the lions." And you were some meat. At least you were in the Arab world.

KILLGORE: I was in the Arab world, but I was outside my business, and that was a very, very bad assignment for me. It almost got me thrown out.

Q: What were you doing in Baghdad as the public affairs officer?

KILLGORE: You know what a public affairs officer does. You have an information side, and you have a cultural side of what you're trying to do. You bring speakers and you bring musicians.

Q: But this is in a normal country. Had we had relations very long?

KILLGORE: Ever since the royalist regime had been overthrown in 1958, and they had found in the archives that the CIA was heavy in everything. You see, we had been feuding with Gamal Abdel Nasser at that time, and we decided—"we," the CIA and whoever was running State. Most of our affairs seemed to be run by fools. We were going to turn Baghdad into Cairo. That was going to be the great movie center, was going to be intellectual center of the Arab world. Anyone who knows Baghdad knows it's never going to be. Cairo is always going to be the center for a variety of reasons.

In any case, the revolutionary regime had dug into the archives and found out that CIA was heavy into the royalist regime and all the ministries. As a consequence, the government was totally suspicious of everything we were trying to do. It was difficult to travel. You were afraid to see your Iraqi friends too much, for fear that you'd get them in trouble with the Mukhabarat, the intelligence people. That's the Arabic word for intelligence. We, of course, tried to help place certain material in the Arab press. We had some success at that.

Q: Did we have an ambassador when you were there?

KILLGORE: Yes, Robert C. Strong, who had been head of the Office of Near Eastern Affairs, was there as ambassador when I arrived. He served earlier in China as the Chinese Communists were taking control.

The problem with Dean Rusk was this: it was his basic—how would you put it?—was it his basic temperament? Was it a fundamental flaw of character? He grew up as a poor boy in Georgia, and by virtue of the fact that he had brains enough to go to college and get off to Oxford and become a Rhodes Scholar, then catch the eye of the Rockefellers, he went on up and got this, that, and the other, and became a famous man. But he essentially was always a poor southern boy supplicant. He never saw himself as a leader. He was a supplicant, trying to please somebody else. He never had a lead. It certainly was not his lack of brains. He was a terribly sharp man. I suppose he was. How do you analyze a man who will not make decisions if he can possibly avoid them?

As a matter of fact, the '67 War, you can almost point it at Dean Rusk. You can see a campaign starting as early as '63, '64. The Israelis and Israel lobby were turning Gamal Abdel Nasser into an Arab Hitler. And the objective was to cut off the PL 480 wheat, make things so bad that you can't continue to use the wheat program.

Q: For the record, will you explain what the PL 480 wheat is?

KILLGORE: That's the Public Law 480. It was, in effect, “Let's give the world free American grain because our farmers are producing more wheat than we can consume.”

Q: We were distributing our surplus under Public Law 480.

KILLGORE: Eventually the wheat thing was killed. Then, in my opinion, relations with Nasser had become embittered, and the '67 War became inevitable. Rusk could have slowed that up or even stopped it if he had been willing to take a lead, been able to

articulate what and where our interests were. He had the most felicitous turn of phrase you ever heard, but nevertheless, he was lacking in eloquence, literally, in the ability to articulate to the American people—to our ignorant American people—what our interests were. The people are willing to listen, and the people have a considerable amount of wisdom, once you can get through to them.

But that's why a guy like George Shultz is a pathetic character as a Secretary of State. He couldn't articulate, “Let's go have dinner.” He is flat. He has no fire in him at all. He plods along like an old dirt farmer.

Q: Back to Baghdad. That was a period, then, that you had very little contact. It was not a very productive period?

KILLGORE: We had a good time. Our embassy was not very talented. The government was very unfriendly. I had a good time, I made lots of friends, I like the Iraqis, I had lots of friends among the foreign diplomats there. I traveled to the extent I could get permission to travel. I was well liked in the embassy. But I didn't think it was fair that I should be turned over to do a public affairs officer job in Iraq, when my essential business was political. I say, I suppose immodestly, I was well aware of the fact that I was not merely adequate; I was a damn good political officer, one of the best, one of the best writers, one who grasped concepts, and a real grasp of politics.

Q: Going back to this diversion, you were saying this was really part of a maneuver on the part of Crockett management. This was not a matter of an Israeli lobby getting rid of—

KILLGORE: Yes, I think the idea was to get me out.

Q: Was this the Israeli lobby working on you?

KILLGORE: Yes, someone had to have suggested that I would be a good one for that job.

Q: You do sort of take a jolt out of the Arab world. Because after Baghdad, which is one remove from the major thing and also in sort of a public relations type job, you move then to Dacca. This is 1967 to 1970. That's still within the bureau, but way the hell over.

KILLGORE: That's right, in the outer reaches.

Q: Outer marches.

KILLGORE: Outer marches, as they say. That's right. Well, you can kind of make an explanation there, Stuart, that we had suffered this disaster. The Israeli attack on the Egyptian Air Force, grabbing up all this territory, we were blamed, we were kicked out of Baghdad, out of Damascus, essentially out of Cairo, out of Yemen, a lot kicked out of Sudan. We may have been closed up entirely in Algeria. I just can't remember all the countries now.

Q: But our ties with the Arab world were—

KILLGORE: That's right. The places you could go in the Arab world were much reduced.

Q: The Arabists were really—

KILLGORE: The next thing I know, “You're going to Bengal.”

Q: So this was just, “What do you do with an Arabist?” in a way.

KILLGORE: After the '67 War, though, I can certainly—and as a matter of fact, you've heard of GLOP, Global Assignments Policy.

Q: Yes. Could you explain for the record what GLOP means?

KILLGORE: Well, they say that Henry Kissinger went down to a chiefs of mission meeting down to Mexico City, to meet our ambassadors from Latin America. Henry was planning

a tour, apparently, down in Latin America at that time. The ambassadors were cautioning him about this, that, or the other problem, and “When you get to Brazil, watch this, and between Peru and Bolivia, there's this problem. Don't forget. So you have to be very careful how you handle this, that, and the other.”

The great Henry, according to this story, was much put out by this. He accused our ambassadors from Latin America, in effect, to this “localitis” that you referred to earlier. He, of course, claimed he had the world view, but the others didn't have the world view. He had it. He managed to have it, but they didn't. Thus, he came back and came out with this GLOP telegram. I remember how the thing began. Do you remember it? “In these days of enhanced intellectual ferment,” it began. Christ, when the hoe was invented, hey, this changed the whole world! The plow!

In any case, that happened. As you may know, there are some Arabists who are quite convinced—because Henry was the world's most devious man, without any doubt—who believe that Henry's real objective was to get out of the Middle East the Arabists that the Zionists didn't like. Because Henry was not so crypto—he just was Zionist. So I was sort of shot off to New Zealand for three years.

Q: This is later on, after Dacca.

KILLGORE: In any case, if you look at my career after the '67 War, one of the problems now, Stuart, even from earlier, from the period of '61 to '65, I was a rather outspoken person. I said what I thought. To a degree, I was guilty of naivete. I didn't quite realize that the system was as ruthless as it is, and I thought, “Well, I'm dealing mostly with my fellow Arabists, and they're honorable people, and I know they feel the same way. True, I'm speaking out more than they are.” You could kind of get by with it up until '67. But after the '67 War, there was a full-court press, to use a basketball term, by the Israelis and their lobby to shut off people who were going to be critical.

There's another factor here. You know, if, say, the Office of Near Eastern Affairs or Near East South Asian Bureau knows that due to the political situation of this country, U.S. policy is going to be a certain way, a Foreign Service Officer has to go along. In other words, what you had to do becomes a kind of a categorical imperative, to use Kant's phrase. Thus, an officer who is going around always complaining about this and saying, “Look, we're going the wrong way. We're hurting our interests. We're hurting our way with the Arabs. In the long run, we're hurting the Israelis,” in a way he becomes sort of a pain to have around, because it is a constant sort of verbal finger-pointing at the people who are not acting in that way. You become a bit of a nuisance. It would have been far better for me, and my career would have gone probably a lot further than it had, if I had just probably intellectually said, “Look, Killgore, don't be an arrogant guy, thinking that you, one man, is going to push policy one way or another. You're caught up in a very strong stream going a certain direction. It's arrogant of you to think that you can turn it or that you can divert it.” In other words, you must recognize political realities.

Q: The political reality being that we are going to be a strong supporter of Israel.

KILLGORE: Period.

Q: That's it.

KILLGORE: Now, there is a consequence, however, of this, and that is it doesn't apply just to Israel. You're supposed to keep your mouth shut with respect to other problems, too. In Iran, for example, we didn't even talk to the opposition after 1968, not a word. But this was also related to the whole Israel issue because the Israelis and the Iranians had a very close deal worked out together.

Q: I'm sure today, in 1988, that it would be difficult to talk about how we deal with Central American policy, particularly Nicaragua.

KILLGORE: The whole point is, things eventually blow up in your face. For your own personal advancement and aggrandizement and for the welfare of your family and getting ahead and getting the recognition, it's best to go along. To get along, you go along, as they used to say.

On the other hand, why do we go to all the extreme trouble we go to, to try to select the best and the brightest young boys and girls to be Foreign Service officers if you can't even use what they're saying, if, in fact, they are instructed, “Keep your mouth shut”? Literally, some officers have been instructed, “Get out to your post and don't talk so much about the Palestine problem.” Did anyone say to the American Government, “You're going to have a big revolt in the West Bank in Gaza against the Israelis”? No! It sounds unpleasant. The line is that the occupation has been relatively benign. Besides, according to Ben Venisti, an Israeli, the occupation effectively has gone too far to turn back, so no need to talk about it any more.

In other words, our whole society is ignorant, and the Foreign Service officers know that in any area of the world that's controversial—that is, the realities there conflict with what the so-called conventional wisdom is in American society or in the American Government—the best thing for him to do is keep his mouth shut. Although we have every facility in the world to get things straight, we have a billion dollar communication system, we have many officers in many parts of the world to report. As an officer and an embassy, you have access, literally, to anyone practically you want to see. You can talk to the prime minister, even, you can talk to the best brains in the country, the best professional people, philosophers, professors, politicians. We have every way to know. If you have the wit to know, the wit to understand, and the opportunity to learn about something, then you can't report about it because it conflicts with something back in Washington, isn't it a sad show?

Q: It is a sad show. I suppose it's probably not anything different from what I can imagine what Soviet diplomats have been reporting back to the Soviet Union for years. Even

though they see one thing, they have to report it so that it meets with the Marxist scheme of things. We're going to return to this soon.

—

Q: You were public affairs officer in Baghdad, sort of in exile, to some extent. Then in 1967 came the '67 War, the June War with Israel, in which most of the Arab countries severed relations with the United States, throwing all of you out. At that point, you were sent to Dacca.

KILLGORE: In East Pakistan, yes.

Q: What was your job there?

KILLGORE: I was number two. I was there three years. Essentially, I was doing the political reporting, which I mostly did everywhere, but I also took a hand in running the post under most of the consul generals. During the time I was there, Stuart, for about one year, at various times all added up together, I was the acting consul general. Incidentally, a very big post, hundreds of people, counting the AID mission and everything.

Q: Would you describe the political situation as you saw it in 1967, when you went to Dacca?

KILLGORE: It didn't take me very long, a few weeks, to figure out that East Pakistan and West Pakistan would not stay together, that Bengal would break away and establish a separate state.

Q: It became Bangladesh.

KILLGORE: Yes, the present Bangladesh. They had too much against them, the difference of language, of course, Bengali on one side and Punjabi and Urdu on the west side. From the beginning, the central government, at first in Karachi, later, of course, in Islamabad,

gave no official standing at all to the Bengali language from 1947, when the country was established, when the Moslem parts broke away from India, until '52. Bengali, although it was spoken by probably 60% of the people of the combined country, had no standing. Every year, language riots on a certain day, mostly at the University of Dacca. Of course, the Bengalis resented this. Also, as you know, the two parts of Pakistan were separated at least by 1,200 or 1,300 miles of India. The Pakistan Army, gradually, during the period I was there, it had come to be regarded as an occupation Army.

Q: During the time you were there?

KILLGORE: During the time, certainly, when I was there, because Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who became the first president, was in jail already when I got there. He was, of course, a Bengali nationalist. He had come into prominence earlier, when he was a student at the University of Dacca. Political ferment was always at the University of Dacca in the capital city. He had taken the side, as a student, of the people who did the cooking and cleaning and sweeping and grass cutting and so forth, who made practically nothing. He stood up for the really down and out in Bengal, and became a hero to the Bengalis. Of course, the central government was afraid of him and threw him in jail. Eventually, in June 1969, the central government cooked up a conspiracy in which they accused Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and about ten other Bengalis of plotting to separate East Bengal, as it was called, from the rest of Pakistan. They had a trial, which became a sensation, called the Agartala conspiracy trial. It's a little village just across the line from what was then East Pakistan over on the edge of India. They claimed that the plotters met there. But mostly I think it was cooked up. There was no such plan, really, to separate Bengal from the rest of Pakistan. What they wanted was a chair. They wanted to be part of the show.

In the early days of Pakistan, of course, there had been Bengali prime ministers of Pakistan, but those days were gone. In the 1970 general elections after I left, the party headed by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman won something like 60% of the seats in the

Parliament, and thus he should have been the next prime minister. But instead, the Army refused to go along, and in effect, the civil war started.

Q: You're really talking about Army rule, aren't you?

KILLGORE: Army rule.

Q: It was the Army that was being this. I assume from what you say that the Army was not Bengali.

KILLGORE: You had a few Bengali officers, but just sort of a token. There was also a racial or color thing pulling the two parts of Pakistan apart. If you think we have a color bias in the States, you should go to South Asia, where color means almost everything. During the Agartala conspiracy trial, it came out that one of the top ranking Punjabi Army officers in then East Pakistan had referred to Bengalis generally as “little black bastards.” That was played, and it was reported in the Baltimore Sun by Adam Klymer, who now works for The New York Times, who attended the conspiracy trial. I said in my first reporting, the day the trial opened, that the Agartala conspiracy trial was a portentous political development, inasmuch as all the defendants were Bengali, if they had been found guilty, they would all have been heroes to all of East Pakistan, who felt they had been mistreated by the central government.

There's another factor here separating them. The Bengali jute captured quite a bit of hard currency foreign exchange. Jute is a crop, which is used for rugs, wall coverings, and all sorts of things, rug backing. Of course, it earned the hard currently which the central government took and kept. Then they gave rupees, which are little pieces of paper, to the Bengalis. For example, “Okay, this year you've got 3 billion rupees (I'm just pulling a figure out of the air) for development. We're going to do this, that, and the other with this money.” But the red tape was such that maybe only 1 billion got spent, and the other 2 billion reverted at the end of the fiscal year back to the central government.

So Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, once he was released from prison—and we became good friends—said to me, “They are stealing my jute. They are stealing me blind,” was the accusation. He said, “My fellow Moslems in West Pakistan are treating me like a tenant.” He personalized everything. He became Bengal, and the jute money was his, and jute was “my jute,” “my people.” He was a charismatic Messiah type. He said, “When the British were here, all they wanted to do was trade. The British were far better to us than our fellow Moslems in West Pakistan.”

Q: Islam being the one thing that was the determining cause for the union of East Bengal and Pakistan.

KILLGORE: That was pushed by Ali Jinnah, who became the first president of the United Pakistan, he said he had been a Hindu, the upper crust, probably even a Brahman. From the look of him, I'd say he was a Brahman. His family probably came from Kashmir, from the looks of him.

The problem, however, was that Islam had an appearance of being a unifying factor; but, in fact, it wasn't because the Moslem armies, Arab armies in the seventh and eighth centuries came out and got along the same line as Alexander the Great, which was along the Indus River. Alexander said he stopped there because there were no more worlds to conquer. What he really ran into was the massed millions of India.

Q: His army just said, “This is it.”

KILLGORE: “This is too far. We've been gone too long.”

Q: They just turned back.

KILLGORE: That's right. In any case, the Bengalis were a totally different type. They love dance, they love poetry, they love music. In other words, Bengalism, the feeling of being Bengali, was much stronger than feeling Moslem. Whereas in the West, you had

had a collision between Islam and the Hindu millions of India going on for centuries and centuries. There had been a lot of bad blood. A lot of blood had been spilled. Right now to this day, Pakistanis look with red eyes at the Indians. So they had one view, it was the fire and the sword, and we have to fight. This was quite foreign to the Bengalis. They should never have been separated from the rest of Bengal. Frankly, Stuart, I don't blame just Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who was the first president of Pakistan; I also blame the British. The old imperial “divide and rule” was still very much in their minds, in my opinion.

Q: Talking about policy now, let's go back. You went there in 1967. Who was the consul general?

KILLGORE: Lee Metcalf was the consul general when I arrived for the first few months. Then Leslie Squires became the consul general. Actually, he was a USIS man, had been the public affairs officer in Pakistan, as a whole. Then the last few months I was there, it was Archer Blood.

Q: What was our—I almost hesitate to use the word—policy toward East Pakistan? Did you call it East Pakistan or did you call it East Bengal?

KILLGORE: We called it East Pakistan, sometimes referred to as the East wing and the West wing.

Q: This was before the war and the break and the creation of Bangladesh. What was American interests when you were there, if any?

KILLGORE: Our military officers and CIA and conservative diplomats found the West Pakistanis, the Punjabis, and the Pathans terribly attractive guys. They were big guys like you. They could drink Scotch whiskey with the best, they spoke impeccable English, and they could handle a riding crop without looking ridiculous. But they had some most unrealistic ideas. They had a notion of fighting the Indians and taking all of Kashmir, which they said was rightly theirs. They didn't realize that they were probably outnumbered nine

or ten to one, both in numbers and in resources and everything else, and there was never any chance of jousting with India. This was the days of pactomania, as it's been called.

Q: Not Pakistanomania, but pactomania. We wanted to have alliances, CENTO, SEATO, NATO.

KILLGORE: Close to the Soviet Union, we'd have allies. In that sense, Pakistan was seen as important. I think, essentially, our policy push for West Pakistan, we mostly liked the West Paks. We found the poverty and the misery and the degradation of life in East Pakistan turned us off very much. There were people who sympathized with the Bengalis, of course, but any attempt to tell Washington or the embassy in Islamabad that things were ripe for falling apart, of course, was quite impossible to do.

You know, this amounts to a digression, but our problem is we can't handle problems until they overwhelm us. Someone explained America this way: we're half Celtic and half Germanic. But essentially we are Celtic. Just as the great English common law, on which our whole legal system is based, came with tiny gradual accretions through the centuries, as facing actual problems, and where the whole idea of the reasonable man deciding what is the proper thing to do in these circumstances, that's the way our foreign policy is done. You can't warn beforehand. You have a grand thing over there at the State Department called the Policy Planning Council, where you have some really brainy people, pretty good intellectuals, and they write very fine papers that make pretty good sense. But what they're doing has little relevance to what actually goes on in the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. It's a desk officer doing little bits and pieces of paper every day, handling things just as they come up.

Q: What I'm hearing here is as far as our feeling towards Pakistan at the time was being created by the personal relationships of officers mainly in West Pakistan with people they related to, charming macho-type people and all they could get along with well, the type of people you could "do business with," is the term. So in lieu of sitting down and saying,

“Where are we going with this subcontinent,” you're talking about people sending reports back to Washington about how fine these people are, and sort of a disparagement of another area, mainly because of personal feelings, rather than somebody saying, “We want to be with this emerging group,” or thinking about what we wanted to do. Is this what I'm hearing?

KILLGORE: Yes, I think what you say is correct. Of course, there are complexities here. Don't forget the Indians had a foreign minister named Krishna Menon.

Q: Oh, my God, yes. And defense minister, too.

KILLGORE: He may have been the deputy prime minister.

Q: I think he was often the defense minister.

KILLGORE: In any case, Krishna Menon was a fiery intellectual type of fellow who was quick to denounce the West. I suppose looking back on British imperialism was part of what formed him. In any case, he was very unpopular in Washington, and when the Paks portrayed themselves as jousting with Krishna Menon, of course Krishna Menon was going to come out second best. In fact, of course, our Ministry of Foreign Affairs or State Department is generally quite incompetent. This is one of the periods when Dean Rusk, as I suggested, who was a brilliant fellow, but who was a supplicant type and never took any interest in anything other than Southeast Asia, you couldn't get anyone at the topside to listen at all. It may have been that no matter what we did, Pakistan was going to break up. There was no virtue in staying together, just as a man and wife who really can't get along and probably should never have married, there's no need to try to hold together artificially something that is rejecting each other. But in any case, it was a fascinating political thing to write about from Bengal.

Q: Without any firm line of policy but more a mind set, showing some disfavor towards East Pakistan, mainly because of the type people, I have to say that this reminds me a

little, on reflection, of when I was consul general in Naples, Italy, of our people in Rome towards the southern Neapolitans, who were very lively and energetic, not as energetic, efficient, but they weren't the type of people you could do business with, as opposed to those who were running FIAT and all up in the north. This often happens. We find ourselves more attracted to the ones who come closer to, you might say, the Teutonic or more business like. Anyway, this is a digression.

In your reporting, were you under any constraints on what to report, either from your consuls general or from our embassy in Rawalpindi or in Karachi? It had moved at that time.

KILLGORE: Rawalpindi. You were under some constraints. The embassy, for example, in Islamabad, was not persuaded that the central government was treating the Bengalis unfairly by hogging the hard currency from the jute sales. You couldn't persuade the embassy that the political situation in East Pakistan was really quite volatile and ready to start burning. We weren't under much pressure. We were under some pressure. This was an interesting thing. How did you handle it in Naples? Did you report directly to the State Department?

Q: Yes.

KILLGORE: We did, too, in Dacca.

Q: For the record, there's a difference between reporting from your consulate general directly to Rome or to your capital, where they can maybe put their own spin on it, as opposed to reporting directly to Washington with a copy to the capital. Often this is done mainly because it's easier to do it that way.

KILLGORE: Basically, the embassy is Islamabad believed that we were taking localitis pills, we were too hung up on Pakistan as seen from Bengal. I think the State Department felt somewhat the same way. I learned several years after this happened

that Ambassador Joseph Farland, who was, during most of my time in Dacca, the United States ambassador in Islamabad, when the last consul general, Archer Blood, left, he recommended my name to be the new consul general, which I didn't learn anything about until much later. He apparently sent it back to the State Department. Subsequently, when I found out about this, I was talking to Ray Hunt, who was the executive director of NEA. The poor guy was killed.

Q: He was assassinated in Rome.

KILLGORE: That's right.

Q: Ray Leaman Hunt.

KILLGORE: When I mentioned it to Ray, he said to me, “Yes, but you wouldn't have got it because you were too identified with the Bengalis.” I had been reporting. What am I supposed to report about? Burma or Pakistan? Or am I supposed to talk about Bengal and how the Bengalis feel about things?

Q: I think we are pointing up something here, that there is a problem. If you report on local events which may sort of upset the establishment, again not because of a policy matter, but just because how the mind set—we're really talking about a mind set.

KILLGORE: That's it. Id#e fixe, as the French say. That's right. Fixed views of what things are.

Q: Fixed views. And if somebody comes in, mainly because they're reporting from a different area where they see it differently, not because they are trying to particularly push a cause, but if you are in a post or a country where there are events happening, they tend to be dismissed by the establishment. This is not a matter of the President in a new administration coming in and saying, “We don't want to hear this.” This is a matter within the State Department.

KILLGORE: Stuart, you have put that as well as it can be put in just a few words. That is a permanent ongoing problem, and I don't really see that there is any answer to it, given the fact that our society is so totally ignorant about the outside world. After all, we are picked to be Foreign Service officers because we have the capacity, the wit to learn, and being in a country or part of a country, you have the opportunity and the occasion to learn what the situation is. And perforce you come to certain conclusions that, in your opinion, are of some moment, some consequence to your own government back home, being honest, you have to report it. You have to report it as you see it.

Now, it was Talleyrand or some French foreign minister, once said, “Let's, for God's sake, don't have too much zeal.” Well, to my mind, there isn't quite enough zeal in our system. The Foreign Service officers have learned, as a survival mechanism, that you don't joust intellectually against these fixed ideas and views and outlooks that prevail in Washington. If you do it too much, you're reckoned to pick up something called localitis.

Q: The outstanding example, of course, is the fate of the old China hands, which, as we've seen in other circumstances, was not just a matter of outside political forces taking it, but within. These were people going against the conventional wisdom within the professional service, that China was falling apart.

KILLGORE: What they saw very clearly, with great clarity, was that the Chiang Kai-shek regime had become corrupt and discredited, and that Mao Zedong and his forces were going to rule China, and they said so. They were another classic example of the messenger being blamed for the message.

Q: In a place that, at that point, was not critical, but later did become critical, because our tilt to Pakistan and the bad odor that lingers from this, we're talking about the '71-'72 split, still taints our relation with India.

KILLGORE: It rankles in my heart.

Q: This is already in the system. This was not just necessarily Henry Kissinger coming up with an idea. It was in the system already.

KILLGORE: It was in the system, but it was personified in Henry, of course, who was tilting, as he called it, towards Pakistan and was continuing to overly tilt towards Pakistan when anyone who had a lick of sense, which Henry did not have, incidentally, he was too ignorant, when there was no chance. The time had passed when it might have been possible for East and West Pakistan to get back together. It was irretrievably lost.

Q: ~"You don't back losers" is number one in policy.

KILLGORE: And not only that, there was a very serious moral problem involved here, because a decent person, if he looks at evil and killing and slaughter, you have to stand up and speak out against that. You are obliged to as a decent person. At the time that the Pakistan Army was slaughtering Bengalis by the tens of thousands and throwing them in the rivers, letting them float down to the Bay of Bengal, Henry was still making these strong statements on behalf of Pakistan. In fact, it got so bad that the staff at Dacca sent a blast cable which actually, in effect, wrecked Arch Blood's career, because Arch might have been the ambassador to India except for that.

Q: We are talking about Archer Blood, who never did become an ambassador.

KILLGORE: No, he never did.

Q: But highly thought of within the State Department. Everybody knew he was a prime candidate, even I, who didn't deal in the area, thought of him as being one of our very top diplomats.

KILLGORE: He was a very top diplomat. He was a very decent chap, very highly regarded professionally, and greatly admired. People felt great affection for Archer Blood because of his character and his personality, a terribly decent chap.

Q: Moving on now, you left Dacca in 1970, again before the actual rupture came between the two sides. You went to the Department for two years. What was your job in the Department?

KILLGORE: That two-year period I was deputy to Talcott Seelye, who was head of the Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria directorate, it was called. I think it was called Arab Region North. I was his deputy, but with particular responsibility for Lebanon and Syria. Of course, when Seelye was away, I was the acting country director for the Arab Region North.

Q: Let's talk about your responsibilities. You had been doing Iraq-Iran affairs. This is '61 to '65, so this is pretty much the same equivalent, wasn't it?

KILLGORE: Right. As a matter of fact, we used to joke, Stuart, and say that it was a variation on the Protestant ethic, which is if you work very hard, save your money, go to church every Sunday, you'll die and go to heaven. We used to say that if you worked very hard in the Foreign Service, kept your nose clean, didn't joust with anyone above you, you could aspire ten years later to have the job that you have now. That was the system.

Nevertheless, the desk officer jobs were still sought after, and setting up the directorates, of course, was a peculiar—

Q: I'd like to interrupt here, just one thing. I'm trying to get a feel for the system. You had been reporting for almost three years on the situation in East Pakistan, a place that was getting ready to blow. Was there anything the equivalent of extensive debriefings, tapping your knowledge when you came back, by the desk or by those who were dealing with the matter?

KILLGORE: Yes. I knew the people on the desk, so, of course, I talked with them. The debriefings generally were with INR, intelligence and research. Mostly the desk officers,

as you may know, are so busy that they sometimes hardly have time to talk to their ambassador when he comes back. You are jumping around from one thing to another.

Incidentally, before actually starting to work on ARN, which was this directorate I mentioned, I all but went to Sri Lanka as DCM. I was about to get on the plane, as a matter of fact. The Department had picked me to go, called me on home leave in Alabama, and I was supposed to work for Ambassador Strausz-Hup#. Where is Strausz-Hup#?

Q: He's in Turkey, still. He's 85 years old and he's what is known as a survivor. He's a political appointee on, I think, his sixth embassy.

KILLGORE: May I digress just a second? In any case, Strausz-Hup# was a great political man, supposedly, miscalled the national elections in Ceylon in 1970, he and Tom Arnold, who was his DCM. Apparently, before he went over to Athens to have his teeth fixed, had confidently predicted that the center and right would win the national elections in Sri Lanka in 1970. Well, the Communists and the left won, and as a consequence, he bounced Tom Arnold, the DCM, out so as to make Tom the fall guy, and I was going to replace Tom. (Laughs)

Q: That gives you an idea of some of the internal workings. What was our prime concern in the area you were working with? This is from '70 to '72.

KILLGORE: The prime concern was always the Arab-Israel dispute, of course. That was basically it. We didn't really have any diplomatic representation in Syria, still. The Italian embassy was looking out for our interests, supposedly, there. The reporting we were getting from Damascus was very poor to useless, really.

This was the time when Hafez al-Assad was president of Syria, took over in that period, and he's still in power. The situation in Lebanon was not good. You could see the confessional problems would eventually tear the country apart. The Israelis, of course, had become increasingly dependent upon us after the '67 War. We didn't have any big

problems right in that period. I think it had obviously begun to dawn on the Egyptians and the Syrians, given the events of 1973, that the Israelis had no intention of turning back the Sinai to Egypt and the Golan Heights to Syria. Of course, they were secretly planning, obviously as early as that, to try to hit by surprise to take them back. But as I say, this was a problem that was not clearly seen or one could tell it was really happening.

Joseph Sisco was the Assistant Secretary of State. Kissinger in the White House and Sisco in Near East and South Asian Affairs at State were running our Middle East policy. The professionals in the system essentially didn't have much confidence in either of them.

Q: Kissinger has been mentioned a lot. How about Joseph Sisco? He always seemed to be the man behind Henry Kissinger, carrying a briefcase. This is just the TV view of him. But how did you feel about both his competence in the area and his influence?

KILLGORE: He was influential, but he didn't know anything about the area. He never worked out there or lived out there. So far as I know, he never read a book about it.

Q: He'd never served abroad, as I recall.

KILLGORE: Never served abroad at all. He was a special buddy of Kissinger, of course. We reckoned that their basic tie was a deep affection for the state of Israel and looking to do what Israel wanted done. That was basically our view of both of them, certainly mine. So it was not a very good time. My career had been running down. I thought that as long as Sisco was there, I'd never get a good job, because the Zionists, in my view, had it in for me at that time.

Q: You really felt that you'd been flagged?

KILLGORE: No question that I'd been flagged.

Q: Were there other officers who had the same problem?

KILLGORE: I think my situation was worse than the others. Probably Curtis Jones, who lives down in North Carolina now, had also been flagged. I guess I was probably the main one, because I was the most outspoken. I know, of course, that in '72 when the job came up as political counselor in Tehran, I heard that my name kept appearing on the list, but it was always number three or four, somewhere down the way. In other words, the bureau and personnel were not going to put my name up.

Q: So you felt you were, to a certain extent, marking time?

KILLGORE: Marking time. I did have a friend, Roy Atherton, deputy assistant secretary, who was a decent chap. He, of course, realized that I had been outspoken, but nevertheless, he essentially was not an enemy. He would try to help me if he could do it without expending much capital himself, any personal capital. My boss, Talcott Seelye, was an old friend, a good guy, and he felt the same way I felt, but, he was a real New England establishment figure, sort of looked on himself, naturally, as part of the establishment. Perhaps it didn't occur to him to joust too much; it wasn't his personal style. As I say, he felt the same as I did. I do admire his moral courage. He did not stand back, he just would not pick fights. He went along with the system.

We could perceive, of course, by '71, '72, that the Israelis had become very, very dependent on us. Our AID bill to Israel had gone up, went up every year. Someone had to pay for the '67 War. Relations with Arabs were very, very poor. If you look at the area, it's very easy to tell that you've alienated a very big area and many millions of people, not to mention the Moslem world as a whole, which is much bigger.But I had a good time. Being the desk officer is a lot of fun.

Q: You felt you were marked by the Zionists, but how did this translate within the Department of State, as far as you personally were concerned, as far as assignments go?

KILLGORE: Basically, you are worried about your next assignment. You know they rank you one through whatever it is in your class. Now, according to the cone, as well, which is really a corrupt system. I call it “screw the political officers and promote the boneheads.” But basically, if you don't get good jobs, you're not likely to get promoted. You have to get a challenging job or a job where you are conspicuous.

Q: You can speak as a member of a promotion panel from counselor to minister counselor. It's the job that counts.

KILLGORE: Essentially the job. So in any case, actually, I got out of this assignment eventually in '72, which I was glad to get out of. That's not quite true. I was to have taken over the directorate from Talcott Seelye. He had heard he was going to Kuwait as ambassador. Joe Sisco had told him. The ambassador to Kuwait was a drunk and was making a fool of himself, and they were pulling him out. Seelye was supposed to go replace him. When Seelye talked to Sisco about who was going to succeed him if and when he did go to Kuwait as ambassador, Seelye said, “Killgore.” And Sisco did not veto me. Sisco said, “That's all right,” according to Seelye, and I'm sure.

So when I don't express much admiration for Joseph Sisco, I'm not implying that he was altogether a mean-spirited man who would hold a grudge and say, “I'll see that Andy Killgore never gets anything.” Because, of course, if I had taken over the directorate—actually, this was in 1971 that Seelye was supposed to have gone off to Kuwait. Of course, I then would have been on the '72 promotion list for sure, because I would have been in charge of the directorate.

This is digressing quite a bit, but Spiro Agnew, our vice president, had visited Jeddah and run into Bill Stoltzfus, who was the DCM. They got along famously well. To make a long story short, Seelye was sidetracked, and Stoltzfus got the ambassadorship to Kuwait.

Q: How did you get this assignment to Tehran as political counselor, which at the time was considered a fairly important assignment?

KILLGORE: It's a big assignment, a very big embassy, class one embassy and all that. Because Joseph Farland, political appointee, was appointed as ambassador to Tehran.

Q: And he had been in Pakistan.

KILLGORE: He had been the ambassador in Pakistan when I served in the East Wing, and I saw a lot of Joe Farland and liked him, and he liked me. He liked my reporting. He liked my writing and my style and he also liked my personal style.

Q: You got along well.

KILLGORE: We got along very well. Joe, mind you, he's no giant intellect. But when I heard that this Tehran job was open and that my name was bouncing around on lists but not very high, I told Joe Farland, “Look, Mr. Ambassador, if you have enough political clout to get appointed as U.S. ambassador to Tehran, you certainly have enough political clout to take me as your political counselor. So if you want me to go with you to Tehran, you just have to say in no uncertain terms to the office of personnel, to Joe Sisco, 'It's going to be Andy Killgore, nobody else.'”

It's better to be lucky than rich, as we say. The very next day, as it turned out, as I found out later, Joe Sisco and Joe Farland, the two Joes, were going over to the White House to call on President Nixon and have a photograph taken. In the ride from the State Department via automobile over to the White House, Joe Farland told Joe Sisco, “It's going to be Andy Killgore.”

The next day I got the job. Farland said, “You got it.” You know what Joe Sisco said? “I got Andy Killgore that job.” (Laughs) In any case, that's how I got the job.

Q: So we're talking now about being the political counselor, which means you were in charge of political reporting from Iran, from 1972 until early 1974. What was the situation there and how did you port it?

KILLGORE: The situation was that we were not talking to the opposition in Iran, believe it or not. There was no negative reporting on the Shah.

Q: Was there illegal opposition at that time?

KILLGORE: Really, the Shah was the total boss. No, it was, “Yes, sir, boss.” The Shah was it. As a consequence, of course, it was a very unsatisfying job if, in effect, you can't talk about the political situation. I did have a pretty good job the first eight or nine months that I was there, because Ambassador Farland did not like to write or couldn't write, I don't know. So he would go down and talk to the Shah or to the Prime Minister Hoveyda, or to Khalat Bari, the Foreign Minister, and he would come back, and I would talk to him about what had happened in the conversation. Then I would sit down with my secretary and dictate a first-person telegram, long or short, as if I were Joe Farland, and normally he just shot it off to Washington.

Q: This was pretty much our political reporting?

KILLGORE: That was our political reporting.

Q: In other words, we would talk to the Shah.

KILLGORE: Moreover, there was something very important going on that we were explicitly told not to talk about. Just two, two and a half weeks before I arrived in Tehran, June 26 or June 27, 1972, President Nixon and Henry Kissinger, who was still the NSC man, zipped down to Tehran from Kiev. They'd been traveling in the Soviet Union. They spent one night in Tehran and dined with the Shah, the night of May 30, 1972. They told the Shah that night, “You can buy all the military equipment you want other than nuclear

weapons.” That was a fateful, disastrous step, because the Shah was a megalomaniac. He had been pushing us for years to let him have all this military equipment, and we'd kept him on a short leash until then.

Henry and Nixon flew off the next day to Warsaw. It was almost as if they were down there on a lark. You got yourself this big plane, down to Tehran, back up to Warsaw. As soon as Henry got back, he sent out a message. I don't know if it was ever recorded or not. The word was passed. It's mentioned in a recent book by Professor James Bill, who is now at William and Mary, was at the University of Texas for years, a book called The Eagle and the Lion, about United States and Iran, in which the word was passed, “There will be no second guessing this decision to sell all the arms the Shah wanted. You just carry it out.” Now, this became a painful situation, because I knew dozens of the fellows who were over there as the months and years went by, who were in the business of trying to train the Iranians to use all this equipment, and it piled up in gigantic amounts, covering mile after mile after mile, up hills and mountains, down valleys, with huge fences around it, gathering dust in the sun. Eventually, $25 billion worth of equipment.

Of course, you have to look at the Arab-Israel context to understand. It made no sense in terms of the United States. If you look at Iran, the population of Iran is almost double the population of all the Arab states touching the Gulf. That includes Iraq, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, and Kuwait. As you know, Britain was pulling out from east of Suez then, and some giant vacuum was reckoned to be forming over the Gulf, some power vacuum. We selected the Shah as our strongman. This defies all the rules of geopolitics, of Real Politik. You don't pick the strongest man; you always pick a smaller group to be your special guys on the local scene, for obvious reasons. If you pick the big boy on the block, he has the capability of rushing off on his own. Of course, the Shah and the Israelis were allied close together. The Persians hate the Arabs, and Arabs hate the Persians. This is a fundamental of history. It goes back to Sargon the Great in 2300 B.C. There's a geographic and cultural divide along that Zagros mountain line there.

In any case, this crazy sale of arms went on, and the Shah started talking in the most grandiose terms. He was going to build an empire that excelled that of Cyrus the Great in the sixth century B.C., which was ultimately destroyed by Alexander the Great in the fourth century B.C. He said, “Our industry is really building. We are catching up with West Germany.” Mind you, they were making Kleenexes and assembling a little car called the Kahan, something like that. Surpassed Albania, but not West Germany. And he always talked in terms of ten years, “Within ten years, we'll be overtaking Japan.”

Q: In the first place, this decision, I know, almost all of us within the Foreign Service and certainly within the press in the United States, who were not experts, were wondering, “What the hell are we doing, giving so much?” Really very fancy aircraft, which were the most noticeable things, to somebody who is outside of our control and often an area that was very unstable.

KILLGORE: It doesn't make any sense, except in terms of the U.S.-Israeli alliance.

Q: In other words, this would be off balance to build a super power, military power on the other side of the Arab world.

KILLGORE: If you have a super military power on the west side of the Arab world, that would be Israel, and you have a super power non-Arab, there being this basic antipathy between the Persians and the Arabs, on the east side of the Arab world, then you've got the Arabs squeezed in between, and Israel could keep everything it wanted.

Q: Do you think that Nixon and Kissinger knew what they were doing on this?

KILLGORE: I don't know about Nixon. Nixon was looking, of course, to get re-elected. This was, after all, an election year, 1972. Henry, of course, was just a fifth columnist, as far as I'm concerned. He was working for the Israelis.

Q: Do you think there was anything to our military pushing? Because there is such a thing as economics of scale. In other words, if you want to build an F-14 Tomcat plane, it costs less for the United States Army or Navy to have one of those if you're building 500 than if you're building 40 of them. So if you sell a lot to this oil-rich country, this means your airplanes are going to cost less.

KILLGORE: You can make all sorts of rationales that make a kind of spurious case for doing this. I was complaining among my colleagues quite frequently in Tehran, saying, “This is crazy.” They said, “Well, Andy, this is too big for you to fight with. After all, this is keeping tens of thousands of American workers busy. There's unemployment in the States. It's keeping the factories going. We're making money out of it and he's paying for them.” Just as you can pay less per copy, as the Pentagon says, for a sophisticated fighter bomber if you're manufacturing 1,000 of them, as against manufacturing, say, only 50. Obviously you get a cheaper price. But the problem was that Iran did not have the societal cohesion or the skill level or the internal political solidarity to support this kind of a vast buildup. After all, the farms were being cheated, the workers' housing was being cheated.

Q: So we're really talking about a destabilizing situation.

KILLGORE: It's like a pack mule and say he's strong. You've got 400 pounds on his back. But you see, here's another 1,000. But he collapses, rather than being able to carry it. And that's what happened with the Iranians. It was shameful.

We lived up in a part of Tehran called Darrous, about 5,000 feet up in the foothills of the Elburz mountains there. We had a fairly grand house with a swimming pool. Behind us, however, in a little alley-way, you had some little one-room hutments where people lived. These were families. And they got their water not from a pipe, but they dipped the water out of the jube, the jube that ran along the streets.

Q: Equivalent to a sewer?

KILLGORE: A little cleaner than a sewer, yes. I felt acutely uncomfortable living in those circumstances, when I knew damn well the money spent on U.S. arms should have been put to a better purpose. Also, the Shah's megalomania was becoming such that when he talked about an empire like that of Cyrus the Great, you didn't have to be a very well educated Arab to know that Cyrus the Great ruled countries all the way across to the Mediterranean and, in fact, into Turkey and even into parts of Greece, down into Egypt!

Q: This was an absolute prohibition?

KILLGORE: Absolutely.

Q: Isn't this unusual?

KILLGORE: Unprecedented.

Q: How about not only you, but the officers you dealt with and the ambassador? I would think there would be a matter of revolt, to be able to say, "This is out of bounds."

KILLGORE: It didn't happen. Ambassador Farland was not a very thoughtful man. In other words, he believed the propaganda that there was something called a white revolution going on in Iran. There was a literacy corps, there was a health corps. The Shah had seized the great landed estates and divided them up, given them to the peasants, was the line one heard. Actually, he had wrecked agriculture.

I remember when my eyes first opened to reality. The director of the Peace Corps in Iran asked me, as political counselor, if I would be willing to come down and talk to the Peace Corps volunteers. I said, "Sure." And I did. I learned more from them than they learned from me. They kept referring to a fellow named George. "George has built the greatest society on earth, health corps, literacy corps, villages are being rebuilt, fresh water, pure water." They were talking about George Bernard Shaw—Shah. They referred to the Shah as George. They told me that the so-called literacy corps and health corps that were much

touted in the media and in the PR pronouncements by the government of Iran, were simply not happening at all; they were just words. There was nothing but poverty and misery out in the villages, that the government wasn't doing anything. Subsequently, I traveled to every corner of Iran by road. The truth of what the volunteers said was evident.

Q: The political reporting, which you were supposed to be doing, to use an elegant diplomatic term, they cut your balls off on this. What about the other branch of our reporting, the CIA? They're supposed to be doing this type of work.

KILLGORE: They were in such a close alliance, they were in almost a passionate embrace with the Shah. Don't forget, if you remember the press for years and years and years, the CIA, every time something happened around the world that gave CIA a black eye, they would always say, “But we can't talk about the good things that we're doing. Only the bad stuff comes out.” And our great success in helping to overthrow Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh in 1953, and throwing the Shah back in power, who had actually fled to Rome for a few days, that was regarded as CIA's greatest single triumph. It was so touted for years! It was trumpeted as a great American national victory. We had changed the whole course of a country here. You may recall that Mossadegh, in the press, was referred to at the time as a dangerous leftist, maybe allied with the Communists. This was in 1952-53, in that period. Actually, of course, he was a conservative landlord. He was a nationalist. He wanted to nationalize the oil. That's what it got down to, because he felt that Iran was being robbed by the oil companies.

Q: From Tehran, you left in January 1974, and you went in May 1974 to New Zealand as deputy chief of mission. Why this?[

KILLGORE: I had a short interim assignment down in Bahrain as charg# d' affaires. I was supposed to become ambassador there, I thought. This was again a not unusual type of U.S. Government screw-up. What happened was that CIA had reported that Qadhafi in Libya, come January 1, 1974, was going to require Americans to get their visas and

passports as well in Arabic. This was the false story. So the State Department thought, “Now, how to handle that?” In the first place, it was a damn lie, there was nothing to it. You know how it is, the CIA picks up, like a vacuum cleaner, scraps. So the Department thought, “We'll move out all the people who are due for reassignment, and we'll get an entire new staff in there anywhere near reassignment before January 1, 1974.” So they moved Bob Stein from Bahrain to replace Harold Josif in Libya. Then they popped me down to Bahrain to replace Stein. I stayed only four months.

Then something called GLOP, that we referred to earlier, Global Assignments Policy, came up, and I was sent to New Zealand. They got me.

Q: Is there anything particularly that we might talk about before we return to your assignment?

KILLGORE: No.

Q: Let's call this, as the Italians do, a parentheses in your career.

KILLGORE: Right.

Q: In talking to you, obviously from our interview and obviously how you've been personally, you're not someone who is soft-spoken. You have strong opinions and you express them. To be an ambassador within the Foreign Service, albeit to a large or small country, is not a minor appointment. May I ask how the hell you became an ambassador?

KILLGORE: It was a fluke. I wasn't supposed to get anything, and I was reconciled to that. It goes back to the fact that when Bobby Kennedy was attorney general, he was running something called the counter-insurgency program.

Q: Counter-insurgency.

KILLGORE: Counter-insurgency. I went to the FSI, Foreign Service Institute, and who should be on my country team, pretending we were an embassy in FSI, but Phil Habib. You know who Phil was.

Q: Very well known.

KILLGORE: In any case, rock on along to the tail end of 1976, the very first months of '77, Phil Habib visited Wellington, New Zealand, where I was DCM, on this ANZUS thing, Australia, U.S., New Zealand business. He cabled ahead, saying, “My first assignment was down in New Zealand, and somebody please give a dinner party and invite some of my old friends.” The ambassador said, “Andy, you do it.” We had a lovely dinner, a lovely talk, lots of good Scotch, champagne, good food, a grand time, nice fireplace, nice fire. I didn't really say anything to Phil very much, except that I would like to get back to NEA. I tried not to tell him any tale of woe, which I was tempted to do, but I think tales of woe are kind of boring, generally.

Q: They are counterproductive.

KILLGORE: I think so. In any case, as Phil Habib was shaking hands with me at Wellington Airport, leaving, he said to me in a low voice, “Andy, I'm going to try to help you.” Now, I knew from what someone else had said from talking to Phil, my name had been coming up on ambassadorial lists for about three or four years, but never number one; number two or number three. Always, of course, I didn't get the job.

Another thing, I think that Roy Atherton, who had told me when I went to Bahrain for that ill-starred four month assignment, that he was going to try to make me ambassador, I think Roy felt a little bit guilty that I was shot off down to New Zealand. He wasn't able to swing it for me. I think the combination of Phil Habib and Roy Atherton got me the job, for which I am ever more grateful. But it was a fluke. If Phil Habib had not visited, if Phil hadn't

come to Wellington, New Zealand, when he did, I think that would essentially have been something like the end of my career.

Q: Going to the Persian Gulf, did you have any instructions before going there? Did we have any policy towards the area? We're talking about 1977.

KILLGORE: Not really. It was pretty well understood. These small countries were just recently independent from Britain. Britain had pulled back from east of Suez. Generally, the policy was to keep them disarmed or almost no arms, don't sell them any arms, don't get into any arms race down there. Try to keep on pretty good relations, because we get lots of oil down there. Qatar, after all, why do we have an embassy there? Because it has 700,000 barrels of oil a day capacity, plus probably the largest gas fields in the world. Stay on good terms. Try to build them up. Try to get on good personal terms with them, try to make the United States look good. Try to build up trade to the extent you can. Basically a very easy assignment for me. My Arabic was good.

Q: What was the government, and with whom did you deal?

KILLGORE: I dealt primarily with Issa al-Kawari, the chief of the Amirs office, head of the ruler's office. I dealt with the Amir. Of course, I was on good terms with the minister of education. They had several hundred Qatar students in the States. I was on very good terms with all of them, really. The minister of foreign affairs was not active. He was the ruler's brother, but they were jousting with each other, and he never went near the office. So I dealt overwhelmingly with the head of the Amir's office on almost any problem I had.

Q: What sort of problems might you have?

KILLGORE: The Amir began to complain that we wouldn't sell him any arms. He said, “You don't really regard me as a country.” He said, “After all, a country is supposed to be able to buy arms.”

So I said, “If you'll get someone to give me a list of what you would like to buy, I'll ask permission to go to Washington and see if I can't persuade them.” So basically, I got a list and I did get permission to go back, and I got permission to sell him some things, not all the things he wanted, not the Hawk missiles and not certain fighter planes.

The Qataris were, of course, during the latter part of my assignment, very uneasy about what was happening in Iran. They didn't really like the Shah, but he did represent a stability and legitimacy, since the family had been ruling the country since the 1920s, and when he fell apart, it was quite a big shock to them.

Q: Had the Ayatollah Khomeini and the religious leaders reached the prominence by the time you were there?

KILLGORE: Yes.

Q: What was the religious connection between the two?

KILLGORE: You've got Sunni Islam, which is the main branch, and Shiite Islam in Iran. The Amir said to me many times, “What they call Islam up in Iran, that's not Islam as I understand it.” Of course, he had the desert Arab tradition, where taking and seizing hostages and holding them is something that is simply not done.

Q: It's completely against the law of hospitality.

KILLGORE: Totally against the rules. The holding by the Iranians of our diplomatic hostages in Tehran, was something that the Arab countries were acutely ashamed of. They said, “This is not Islam. We don't want you to think this is Islam. It's not Islam.” So that was a very important thing going on all the time, the arms business, and of course, the price of oil.

Q: Yes. You were there at the time when OPEC had met.

KILLGORE: They had just met in Doha the year before I came.

Q: Doha being the capital.

KILLGORE: That's right. I had hardly sat down at my desk in Doha in the embassy in September 1977, before I had instructions, as did all ambassadors to OPEC countries, to go and importune the rulers or the leaders not to raise oil prices at the next OPEC meeting which was coming up before long. I had a whole long line of things I was supposed to use as justification and rationale for not raising prices. One of them was that the supply and demand picture in the world didn't really support a raise. That part was really untrue.

Q: Oil was around $12 a barrel?

KILLGORE: Oil was getting up there. Oil was $12, $12, along in there. Eventually it went up much higher than that. In any case, I carried out my instructions. I went to the Amir and said, “Please don't raise the price of oil. I'm speaking for President Carter. It's a personal message from him.” I told him I had a number of rationales that had been given, none of which I wanted to use, but essentially I said that, “President Carter is a very good man, and from the things that he said, he's going to try to seek a solution to the whole Arab-Israel problem, and he has his opposition at home, and he needs strengthening.”

The Amir said to me, “You can count on me.” As it happened, President Carter had made a speech somewhere in New England a few months earlier, in which he talked about a Palestinian homeland. Sheikh Khalifa, who was the Amir, said, “I don't care what the others do. I'm not going to raise prices. I'm going to keep them right where they are, and you can tell the President.” That was the end of it. He said, “I want to help President Carter.”

Q: What were the oil interests? Which countries were involved, and how did you deal with them?

KILLGORE: Shell and BP, British Petroleum, were involved there.

Q: Shell being Dutch.

KILLGORE: Royal Dutch Shell.

Q: So these weren't American interests in there.

KILLGORE: No, but we had interests in—I've just forgotten, Stuart, but American companies had a right to buy a certain number of thousands of barrels of oil a month from the on-shore production. The offshore production under Shell, I don't think we had any claim on that. So we didn't have a huge claim on the oil.

Q: So our commercial economic connection there was really the big picture of the price of oil.

KILLGORE: That's right.

Q: There wasn't an American firm going through the President to tell you to do this.

KILLGORE: No, no. That's true enough. Of course, by this time it was known that Qatar had a gigantic gas field offshore, called North Field now, maybe 500 trillion cubic feet, a gigantic thing, in which there was considerable interest. I did everything I could to promote interest in that, because I wanted the American companies to be involved in the exploitation of it, and it will be exploited in the 1990s with these huge LNG, liquid natural gas, tankers that will haul it off to the rest of the world.

Q: Talking about big ships.

KILLGORE: Right. What they do is cool it to where gas liquefied. Also they are likely to bring pipelines to Western Europe, bringing that gas up there. So this is a gigantic project, in which American interests obviously will—

Q: I speak with some experience, because I was a vice consul, in whose terrain and whose consular district Qatar lay when I was in Dhahran back in the late 1950s. I know how small the population is. And with any money coming in at all, the impact must be enormous. Were we doing anything to help them handle the money?

KILLGORE: No. I think a lot of the money was invested in the States, in fact. How it was invested was always a very closely held secret. The man who was in charge of the investments was a Palestinian fellow who was a friend of mine, a close friend of mine. He did tell me enough to know that it mostly was invested in the States. A lot of it, apparently, was invested in U.S. Government paper.

The sales were very good, sales of American automobiles, air-conditioning equipment, earth-moving equipment, heavy equipment.

Q: Practical things.

KILLGORE: Right. There were American companies with overall management consulting contracts on big hotels built by American companies and American architects. One of the biggest long-term interests was, as I say, you had several hundred Qatar students always studying in America, and they came back and started taking over in the government. This was a very valuable thing for us, because the people knew our country.

Q: So relations were very good.

KILLGORE: Relations were very good, and my relations with the ruler were excellent. I did some good reporting from there, I think. Of course, it wasn't the very center of the world, as one can imagine, but nevertheless, it was at the very center of the whole OPEC group. It was in the Persian Gulf after the revolution started in Iran. So there was a focus of interest in that area during this time. We had an evacuation from down there.

Q: Mr. Ambassador, we're coming to the time when there was an evacuation. What was the cause of this?

KILLGORE: We were getting ready to make that ill-fated rescue attempt to try to rescue our diplomatic hostages in Tehran. The State Department had one of those great id#es fixe that if we tried to rescue the hostages and, in the process, killed some Iranians, there would be a fiery reaction in the Arab world to what we did. And for us to be safe, we had to get our people out of there. Nothing could have been further from the truth. It was impossible to persuade the Department that the taking and holding of hostages left the Arabs cold as ice. Not only that, they didn't feel any sympathy for the Iranians anyway. Arabs and Iranians simply don't like each other. There's a different style, an entirely different style. It's like putting a boy from Alabama in the same room with a fast talking, rather aggressive guy from New York. There's going to be a clash of styles there. No, you couldn't persuade them. It was a useless evacuation. There was no reaction against us at all when it failed, there was no reaction to the fact that some Iranians were shot up in that bus there in the desert.

Q: Were there any repercussions from the storming of our embassy in Pakistan, the burning of the embassy?

KILLGORE: That resulted from another incident.

Q: That was another incident. Also there was the mosque incident.

KILLGORE: It came from the mosque incident, basically.

Q: Could you put us a little into the picture?

KILLGORE: What happened was that some Moslems at Mecca seized the Grand Mosque. I was originally of the impression they were Shiites, maybe Iranians, but apparently they were not. Maybe there were some Shiites, but mainly they were—mind you, I don't know

Saudi Arabia very well. I've never actually worked and reported from Saudi Arabia, but I believe that the religious people had a bit of a grudge against the royal family, that they were not strict enough and fundamentalist enough, and they were too modern.

Q: This is a perpetual problem.

KILLGORE: It just goes on and on. The problem is well known. In any case, the Saudis didn't let any information out about what was going on. Then at 12:00 noon one day at the State Department noon press briefing, I think Hodding Carter announced what was going on.

Q: This was 1979.

KILLGORE: Mind you, the Saudis had announced nothing, and presumably they wanted to keep it secret. In Islamabad, they said, “Well, as long as the Americans are the first to announce it (this is a matter of controversy here), they must be the ones behind it.” So they attacked our embassy in Islamabad, and at least one or two were killed. It was a terrifying experience there.

I was opposed to any announcement being made, which I didn't make clear at the time, because I didn't know an announcement was going to be made by the press spokesman. But it seems to me if a an allied country or country to which we are close wants to keep silent about something, it isn't our duty to say anything. We can keep silent, too. We can say we don't want to comment on that.

Q: Maybe it's the fact that we put press people into positions of authority within the public affairs branch. They have the feeling that news is news.

KILLGORE: That's right.

Q: And they want to be on top of it.

KILLGORE: Some months after this, I was in my own home at Doha, and several people were there from the television-radio setup, and we were talking about the attack on the mosque incident. One of them said, “Well, the first we heard about it, the first announcement did come from Washington.”

I said, “Wait a minute now. Are you sure?”

“Yes.”

I said, “How many news services do you subscribe to here at the radio-television?”

“We subscribe to all of them in the world, Agence France Presse, Deutsche Press Agentur, Tass, you name it, Reuters, the whole thing.”

I said, “Okay. Tomorrow I'm coming round to your office, and I'm going to ask you this question, and I want you to look back again. Can you assure me that the first report came from Washington?”

He said, “Yes, it was Associated Press from Washington, D.C., about 3:00 p.m.,” which would have been just about time for the noon press briefing to end and for something to get written up and sent out over the wires. I satisfied myself that they were convinced that the first announcement had come from Washington.

I sent a cable off to Washington, saying, “You know, this is a very strange thing if it happened like that, we were the first, because it got us in an awful lot of trouble.” And I sent it around to all the embassies around the area.

I got in a cable from the embassy in Bahrain, over in Manama, in which the charge or the ambassador had spoken to the Minister of Information over there, who said, “That's right. It came in from the Associated Press.” So I shot this off to Washington.

Then I got a cable from the public affairs officer in Jeddah, in which he said, no, there had been scattered news agency reports of this before we said anything in Washington.

I went back to the radio-television people in Doha and said, “Now look again. Are you sure nothing came in earlier?”

“Nothing. I am convinced of this, they were the first.” The State Department never responded to me—never! And I sent several cables on it. I thought, “Okay, Killgore. Is someone asks you how you're feeling, you're supposed to say 'fine.' Instead, you're giving a detailed line of all your gripes and all your miseries and whatnot.” But time to clam up on this. But the embassy in Jeddah continued to insist there had been scattered wire service reports about that.

I think what actually happened was this, probably. Because Hodding Carter mentioned something about the type of people, of what had been going on, that had pulled this off, I think, of course, the embassy obviously, in Riyadh, and the consul general in Jeddah had been reporting about it, and the desk officers knew about it, and the press people had thus heard about it, but no announcement had been made, because some of the things that Hodding Carter—the exchange of questions between the reporters and Carter, which I had a copy of, suggested that the reporters had been briefed. Some of their questions suggested that they had been told by the desk officers what was going on.

In any case, I never got any satisfaction on how this really happened, but it's very clear to me we made a stupid announcement when we should have kept our mouths shut, and it got us in a hell of a lot of trouble. We should not have been the first to go public on this.

Q: Was there any problem in Qatar from this?

KILLGORE: None whatever. Didn't have any problem of any kind.

Q: I hate to end this, because I'd like to discuss more things. There are two questions I try to ask everyone I interview. Looking back on your career, what would you say was your greatest accomplishment, do you feel?

KILLGORE: I would say my greatest accomplishment was being an honest man in a system where you are encouraged to just keep your mouth shut and go along. I mean, a feel a great personal satisfaction. As we know, if Foreign Service officers keep their mouths shut, something like what happened to the Shah, when the Iranian political cataclysm suddenly burst forth in January 1978, everyone is astonished, and Humpty Dumptys will continue to fall off the wall and astonish and frighten us if we can't say what's going on. Mind you, I don't think there's any help for this. I don't believe in a society as ignorant as ours, I don't believe there's any constituency for foreign affairs at all.

Q: What do you think of the Foreign Service as a career today, looking back on it?

KILLGORE: I have a greater feeling of ambiguity about this now, Stuart, than I ever had. For me, a country boy looking for a job, a marvelous, marvelous career, despite all the setbacks. There were brought on mainly by my own personality or flaws of character or whatever. Generally speaking today if I find kids that I regard as really sharp—and I do mean really sharp—if they are interested in getting into the Foreign Service and they ask my advice, I say, “Go ahead and go for it.” But I don't separately now, individually and on my own, encourage young people to get into the Foreign Service.

Q: What have you done with your knowledge of the Arab world since you've left the Foreign Service?

KILLGORE: I did a lot of highly paid consulting for three and a half years. Oil and gas business was hot, and I knew the area. So I had some sweet annual consulting contracts that took me out to the Gulf, to help American companies that were already doing business

out there and wanted to expand their business, or American oil companies that did not have business out there, but were anxious to get their feet wet.

The biggest thing I've done, the main thing I'm the proudest of is I'm publishing a magazine on the Middle East called The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs. It's now a little more than six years old. I'll show you a copy of it.

Q: Thank you very much for this interview.

End of interview